

Fall 12-2013

## **An Examination of the Requirements and Preparation Required forTubists Desiring a Career in the Military, with Emphasis on Premier Band Auditions**

Patrick Charles Rettger  
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The University of Southern Mississippi

AN EXAMINATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION REQUIRED  
FOR TUBISTS DESIRING A CAREER IN THE MILITARY, WITH  
EMPHASIS ON PREMIER BAND AUDITIONS

by

Patrick Charles Rettger

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

December 2013

## ABSTRACT

# AN EXAMINATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS AND PREPARATION REQUIRED FOR TUBISTS DESIRING A CAREER IN THE MILITARY, WITH EMPHASIS ON PREMIER BAND AUDITIONS

by Patrick Charles Rettger

December 2013

The purpose of this research was to explore the differences between the various military bands in the United States with respect to tuba players. Fourteen military tuba players were interviewed. Based on their responses, each branch's similarities and differences are presented. The research then focuses specifically on the audition process for premier band tuba players. These positions are highly coveted; yet they are not ideal for everyone. A survey was sent to all of the current and a number of prior service premier band tuba players asking them to list important band excerpts for tubists to know for military band auditions. Ten excerpts from that lists are then presented along with suggestions for their proper preparation and performance.

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A Dissertation  
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December 2013

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, David and Judith Rettger. In addition, I would like to thank all of the music educators and applied professors that have guided my education, especially Edward Schwer, Dean Schreckengost, Jack Stamp, Dennis Glocke, Thomas Fraschillo, Gary Bird, Velvet Brown, and Richard Perry. I am grateful for everything that you have taught me, your patience, and your endless support along the way. Finally, I want to thank all of my fellow military musicians past and present. It is your professionalism and hard work that make this document even relevant.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank and acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Richard Perry, and the rest of the committee, Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, Dr. Christopher Goertzen, Dr. Ben McIlwain, and Dr. Heidi Lucas for your help throughout this project.

I also want to thank all those tuba players that allowed themselves to be interviewed or surveyed. Thank you for your opinions and insight. This is especially true for the tuba players that directly aided in the analysis of the excerpts in Chapter V. Your help and understanding cannot be understated.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge C.L. Barnhouse, Boosey and Hawkes, Piquant Press, LudwigMasters Publications, LLC, Carl Fischer, LLC, and Southern Music for allowing me to use your works in this project.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

With approximately one hundred and sixty total active duty bands, the United States military easily employs more musicians than any other organization today. Each band averages approximately 40-50 musicians, meaning that between 6,400 and 8,000 musicians are employed by the United States military. From the perspective of the tubist, each band has between one and nine tuba players, which means that there are over four hundred tubists employed in these bands, including fifty-two in the highest-level or premier bands.<sup>1</sup>

The organization of bands in each branch of the military varies, but in general there are two types of military bands in the United States, regional bands and premier bands. The regional bands perform duties for their military communities both musically and militarily.<sup>2</sup> In the past, it was common for musicians to join these bands right out of high school. In recent years, however, the audition requirements have become more substantial for most of the branches. Furthermore, as the number of college graduates increases and the number of civilian musical employment opportunities decreases, educated musicians are choosing more and more to consider the military band as a viable option. Additionally, many musicians choose to get degrees while enlisted. The result is

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<sup>1</sup> These numbers vary especially at the division, fleet, and squadron level where movement from one band to another is common. Three is the standard number and these bands rarely get more than four and less than two. Most personnel lists for these bands are either unavailable or out-of-date and the information presented here is based on the author's own prior service experience.

<sup>2</sup> Each branch and each band has a unique set of responsibilities. However, the word *militarily* is used in this paper to indicate that the bands may have non-musical responsibilities such as security, or assisting other units with their military training. For example, the author played an opposition force in several military exercises and was required to guard the entrance to several bases and headquarter tents both while deployed and in training exercises at the home base. The amount of military responsibilities varies by service. The Army and Marine band members tend to have much more non-musical responsibilities than the band members in the Air Force and Navy.

that the regional bands have become a home for educated musicians in higher numbers than ever before. These bands are often undersized and undermanned, and the musicians need to be musically versatile.

The second type, the premier bands, perform a national role, playing for presidents and dignitaries from around the world, as well as performing at national events such as funerals at Arlington Cemetery and the Inaugural Parade for the President of the United States. While the regional bands employ the majority of the musicians, the premier bands are in the spotlight more and get most of the attention. Because of this, the premier bands are staffed with musicians that may have master's or doctoral degrees in music, as well as more extensive professional experience as a classical musician. These bands also start their musicians at a higher rank or rating, meaning the basic salary and privileges are greater (at least initially) than the base band musicians. The expectations on the quality of the musicians within each band are therefore higher. As a result, the audition processes are more involved, using a larger panel of judges that come directly from the specific band that is hiring the musician, as well as having multiple rounds that are specific to what that band is looking for. These positions are highly sought-after and it is possible that a hundred musicians might apply for a single opening.

#### Need for Study

There is a paradox that one encounters when examining the amount of pedagogical material written for military band auditions as compared to the parallel information available concerning the orchestral world. Even though there are many resources to help a musician prepare to audition for an orchestra, there is very little to help that same musician prepare for a military audition. Focusing specifically on the

premier bands as they compare to their civilian counterparts, the major symphony orchestras,<sup>3</sup> it becomes apparent that they are similar in numbers of tuba players employed as well as the number of openings that occur over any given period. For example, from 2000 to 2012, the major orchestras had twenty-two openings while the premier bands had twenty-four.<sup>4</sup> These numbers do fluctuate, especially since there are periods where more people chose to retire. But the point is, that even though these two groups have a similar number of positions and openings, there are at least seven series of published excerpt books, plus numerous articles and papers written on orchestral auditioning, while there is virtually nothing written on the military band side.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, there is an age factor to consider. The age limit of 35 in the military prevents many current professional tuba players from being eligible to audition for a military band. Therefore, tuba players winning premier band positions tend to be younger, in many cases still finishing their college educations. On the other hand, musicians invited to audition for major symphonies often have experience in other symphonies and are better known in the tuba community.

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<sup>3</sup> Major orchestra is a term the author is applying to all orchestras that are part of the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians (ICSOM). There are 49 groups in this organization and most employ a single tuba player. On the other hand, there are currently nine premier bands that have a total of 42 tuba players.

<sup>4</sup> The statistics in this paragraph were gathered by going to every ICSOM and premier band website, looking at the roster, reading the tubist's biography, and comparing the number of tubists in each band and when each musician was hired. In some cases, the information was not easily accessible on that organization's website. In these cases, extended research on personal bios and other pages was necessary.

<sup>5</sup> The seven series of published books that the author is referencing are: Keith Brown, *Orchestral Excerpts from the Symphonic Repertoire for Trombone and Tuba* (New York, NY: International Music Company, 1964). Gordon Cherry, *Low Brass Excerpts* (New York, NY: Cherry Classics, 2003). Mark Evans and Klemens Pöpper, *Test Pieces for Orchestral Auditions Tuba/Double Bass Saxhorn* (New York, NY: C.F. Peters, 1993). Carl Nielsen, *Orchestral Studies for Trombone and Tuba* (New York, NY: Chester Music, 1984). Ken Shifrin and Danny Longstaff, *British Orchestral Excerpts for Trombone and Tuba*. (Nottingham, England: Virgo Music Publishers, 1986). Alfred Stöneberg, *Guiseppi Verdi: Orchestral Studies for Trombone and Tuba* (Cologne, Germany: Musikverlage, Hans Gerig, 1970). Abe Torchinsky, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Orchestral Studies for Tuba* (New York, NY: G. Shirmer Inc., 1969).

Finally there is a longevity factor to consider. Musicians in major orchestras tend to hold their positions well past the retirement age of 65. Arnold Jacobs, for example, began playing in the Indianapolis Symphony in 1937, when he was 22 years old. From that point on he played in one major symphony or another for the next 51 years including 44 years in the Chicago Symphony. He did not retire until he was 73 years old. More recent examples include Paul Kryzewski, who spent 33 years as principal tubist in the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Ronald Bishop, who spent 38 years in the same position in the Cleveland Orchestra. Prior to Kryzewski, the tubist for the Philadelphia Orchestra was Abe Torchinsky, who held his position for 23 years, meaning that if the current principal tubist is included, the Philadelphia Orchestra has only had three tubists in the past 64 years. On the other hand, the military musician is often forced to retire before their thirtieth year in service. Therefore, if a musician wins a position with a premier band when he/she is 25 years old, he/she may have to retire before they reach 55 years old whether he/she wants to or not, and would even become eligible to retire as early as 45. Plus, it is not uncommon for some current musicians to decide that the military is not a life for them and get out much earlier than after twenty years. For example, tubist Patrick Sheridan was only a member of the United States Marine Band for a four-year enlistment before resigning and becoming a successful tubist in the civilian world. These decisions increase the chances of finding an opening in a premier band versus the chances of joining a major orchestra, whose tubist may be hired just as young, but stay in the group well into their seventies. This fact plays out in the specific numbers. Of the current roster

of premier tuba players, only five tubists were hired before 1990. In contrast, in the major United States symphonies, nineteen current tuba players were hired before that date.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the music that tubists play in military bands includes challenges not often found in orchestral music meaning that working in one situation does not necessarily make a tubist better in the other. For example, a section of band music will often have continuous music without rests, forcing the tuba section to stagger breaths. This puts a greater emphasis on blending within the section and is usually not a consideration for many orchestral auditions, which tend to put emphasis on blending within the entire brass section. Military bands also perform a significant number of transcriptions. These arrangements often give a large portion of cello, bass, or other non-wind bass parts to the tuba. In these cases, the tuba has to be able to play not only their original passages, but also those parts that might not be idiomatic for the tuba. In either case, a composer or arranger for band will often write music for the tuba that typically would not be written if the tubist were playing in an orchestra.

### Review of Research

A prospective military band tubist must prepare differently for auditions than he/she would for the orchestral auditions. Unfortunately, there is only a small amount written to help tubists aspiring to military band jobs to succeed in their audition experience or to help them understand what the military life is really like if he/she actually wins a position. The books and articles that mention these topics from a tubist's perspective tend to over-generalize. Additionally, even though premier band tuba auditions use mostly band excerpts, virtually no pedagogical excerpt books exist relating

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<sup>6</sup> Like the previous statistics, these numbers come from personal research, going to every premier band's website and reading the tubists' biographies which, include date of enlistment.

directly to the music that should be studied.<sup>7</sup> Some of the other instruments, including trumpet, horn, and trombone are the subject of dissertations whose scope include the exploration of band literature. However, only the euphonium has a published excerpt book that addresses this topic beyond the level of a dissertation. That book, *Euphonium Excerpts: From the Standard Band and Orchestra Library*, was compiled by Barbara Payne with the help of Paul Droste, with performance notes and editing by Brian Bowman and David Werden.<sup>8</sup> Since the vast majority of professional positions for the euphonium are in military bands, this book is essential for euphonium players. Given the number of paid positions for tubists in premier-level military bands, it seems logical that a similar book should exist for tubists.

Beyond the dearth of books and articles on this subject, there are only two dissertations which approach this topic for the tuba and neither does so directly. The first of these dissertations is entitled “Performance Tasks Encountered in Selecting Twentieth-Century Band Excerpts for Tuba: Their Identification, Categorization, and Analysis,” completed by Eric Berman in 1981.<sup>9</sup> The author surveyed a tuba player, the late Don Butterfield who served in the military during World War II; the former assistant conductor and trumpet soloist with the Goldman Band, Kirby Jolly; and former composer/conductor at Hofstra University, Raymond Vun Kannon. Drawing on their responses, he chose eleven works that were found to have difficult tuba parts, and therefore worth discussing. He then provided performance suggestions for each work.

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<sup>7</sup> Tuba auditions are almost entirely band excerpts. Other instruments have their own requirements. For instance, the trombone auditions often have as much a 60% of the audition music coming from the orchestral repertoire.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Payne, *Euphonium Excerpts for the Standard Band and Orchestra Library*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Dallas, Texas: Cimarron Music, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> Eric Berman, “Performance Tasks Encountered in Selected Twentieth-Century Band Excerpts for the Tuba” (PhD diss., New York University, 1981).



There are two areas in this dissertation that could be improved upon. First, there was no consideration made to the application of his choices as they pertain to professional life. In other words, since the military is the only current home of professional full-time paying bands in the United States, and this paper does not take these bands into account, the document loses some of its real world practicality. Second, the author only interviewed three people, none of whom was in the military when the dissertation was written. These issues combine to make the dissertation incompatible with this dissertation's purpose.

The second dissertation in question, written by Brent Harvey Meadows, is entitled "Essential Excerpts for Tuba from Original Works Written for Wind Ensemble."<sup>10</sup> Written in 2007, it begins with a survey of college band directors. Following that survey, the author provides performance suggestions for the works most selected in the survey. This survey is more extensive than the previously cited dissertation. Harvey sent forty-three surveys out; seventeen were returned. In addition, questions pertaining directly to military bands as well as non-original band music are included. Unfortunately, the author focuses on how to include band works in the study rotation of a college professor's studio, and does not pursue questions pertaining to the military. He concludes that further study focusing on preparing the excerpts specifically for a military band audition is necessary. Last, no actual examples of excerpts are included, making further study of these parts difficult. In the end, these dissertations, while treating their chosen topics well, do not address the topic of this dissertation.

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<sup>10</sup> Brent Harvey Meadows, "Essential Excerpts for Tuba form Original Works Written for Wind Ensemble" (DMA diss. University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2007).

## Methodology

The document begins with a description of the current band programs in the four military branches that have regional bands, doing so from a tubist's perspective.<sup>11</sup>

Interviews with fourteen current tuba players were conducted. Chapter II will examine thirteen aspects of each branch's regional band system, their audition procedures, and how each branch runs its band program. Within the area of auditions, the topics are location of the audition, musical requirements of the audition, miscellaneous audition requirements, and indoctrination (ASVAB, MEPS, and military and musical training<sup>12</sup>). The rest of the chapter will look at the life of the tuba player in the band by looking at the following areas: typical band organizational makeup, typical number of tubas per band, musical responsibilities of the tuba player, travel, public relations vs. ceremonial performances, collateral duties (office work responsibilities), physical training, deployment, and trends.

Chapter III will look at the audition procedures and organizational qualities for the premier bands. This chapter will be similar to Chapter II, except it will look at specific premier bands. Concerning auditions, this chapter will look at the following topics: a pre-recorded round vs. an open call, musical requirements in live rounds, weighing of each aspect of the audition, miscellaneous audition requirements, and military indoctrination (MEPS and initial training). The chapter will then examine the life of a tuba player in each band by looking at the following areas: band organizational characteristics, number of tuba players in each band, operational tempo compared to the

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<sup>11</sup> Chapter II excludes the Coast Guard since the only band in their branch is a premier band. The Coast Guard Band, will be dealt with in Chapter III.

<sup>12</sup> These are all defined more clearly in Appendix A.

number of tuba players, travel, public relations vs. ceremonial performance responsibilities, collateral duties, physical training, annual military training, deployment, and trends.

Chapter IV begins with a survey of the leading members of the past and present military tuba community regarding the important excerpts for preparation to audition for these top bands. From this survey, a list of the most important works for premier band auditions will be selected. It is this list that is the foundation of the proposed excerpt book. Chapter V will examine the ten works that received the most votes from the survey. Each specific excerpt will be included, along with preparation and performance comments given by several current and past premier band tuba players, as well as the author's own observations. The document will conclude with a brief summary, plus a discussion of the future band excerpt book that will be based upon the results of the survey.

## CHAPTER II

### OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL BAND SYSTEMS

The first half of this document looks at the similarities and differences between each military band. For musicians, there are two aspects to consider when contemplating a career in the military. First is the entry process. This includes the audition, military and medical tests, basic training, and any additional advanced training that might be required. Each branch has slightly different requirements and procedures, and in some cases the entry process can take up to a year to complete. The second aspect follows this initial process and deals with the life of the musician within their branch's bands. The author will attempt to present an unbiased look at each branch's military band programs using information from interviews with current military band tuba players conducted during the research of this document.<sup>13</sup>

This chapter will focus on the band programs of the four branches of the military that have regional bands, the Air Force, the Army, the Marines, and the Navy.<sup>14</sup> A *regional band* refers to the group of military bands whose personnel periodically rotate from one band to another within that branch.<sup>15</sup> This is different than the premier bands, which have a national responsibility, are considered permanent duty bands, and have other incentives that will be looked at in more detail in Chapter III.

The author is attempting to be as up-to-date as possible with the information, however he is aware that because the military is continually evolving, the information

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<sup>13</sup> These interviews can be found in Appendix B. Furthermore because of Institutional Review board (IRB) requirements, efforts have been made to remove all musician's names and identities.

<sup>14</sup> The Coast Guard has no regional band program.

<sup>15</sup> *Regional band* is employed regularly here though it is not an official term. In fact, each branch tends to have their own individual term for their set of regional bands. In this chapter when the author is referring to specific branches regional bands, he will use that branch's term. If it is a general reference, he will talk about regional bands in general.

presented may change by the time the reader sees this document. It is the author's recommendation that this dissertation should be only a starting point, not the full extent of one's research. Consulting current military musicians, local recruiters, and prior service bandsmen is always recommended.

### The Audition

At some point, a candidate may be required to speak with a recruiter to ensure that he/she is physically and mentally qualified to join the military. In multiple interviews, tuba players emphasized that prospective military band tubists should never sign anything until he/she is officially accepted as a musician.

For future clarification, a band in the Air Force is often referred to as a squadron. A band in the Army is called a unit. Lastly, the Navy and Marines often refer to their regional bands as fleet bands.

### *Logistics of the Audition*

In the United States Air Force, all auditions are run much like those of the Air Force Band in Washington DC. When there is an opening, the specific band will announce the opening both online and by mail to colleges and universities. The band will require each candidate to send a resume and an audio recording of the candidate's playing. The band then invites a number of these musicians to audition for the band in person. In the past the Air Force regional bands had the same personnel policies as their premier band cousin. Musicians in these bands rarely moved and if they did it was by their own choice. However, a recent change in Air Force policy now requires that all region band personnel rotate throughout their career. So even though a candidate is

auditioning for a specific band and that band is where he/she will begin his/her career, it is unlikely he/she will spend their entire career with that band.<sup>16</sup>

In an effort to modernize itself, over the past few years the United States Army Band has gone through a number of changes. When necessary, the old system will be described, then the new, current system. Any musician interested in joining should first contact a local recruiter. That recruiter will contact that region's Army Band liaison, who will be a current Army musician on a temporary tour of duty hearing auditions in conjunction with the Army's recruiting system. The liaison may request a quick unofficial audition over the phone or through other audio/video mediums prior to the official audition. Based on this unofficial audition, a time to administer an official audition may be set up at a location near the candidate's home. Then, within twenty-four hours of the audition, the liaison will send the musician a packet of music.<sup>17</sup> This packet is new to the Army's audition process which has replaced the sight-reading employed previously. Finally, the liaison will come to the local recruiter's office, a local school, or even to the candidate's house, and the official audition will take place.<sup>18</sup>

To audition for the United States Marines, interested candidates first need to contact a local recruiter. That recruiter has been directed to contact a Musical Technical

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<sup>16</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 9 June 2011.

<sup>17</sup> This packet is referred to as a *quick prepare packet* and contains excerpts of marches and other band works. It also will include music that is used to display a musician's secondary musical capabilities such as the ability to play bass lines.

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, interview by author, digital recording, Tucson, AZ, 29 May 2010.

Assistant or MTA.<sup>19</sup> Through the MTA, the candidate sets up an appointment for an audition usually at a location near the candidate's home.<sup>20</sup>

The United States Navy audition process shares similarities with the process for the Marines, and is also similar to the process formerly used by the Army. The Navy usually auditions candidates at the home of the nearest band, school of music, or, if possible, at the home of the band he/she will specifically be performing with for the initial tour of duty. Interested candidates should inquire with a local recruiter or contact the nearest Navy band by phone or through their website for information on how to contact the Navy Music Program Auditions Supervisor.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Musical Requirements for the Audition*

There are no standard requirements in the audio recording round for the United States Air Force. However, a requirement of contrasting music, such as a lyrical and a technical etude, is common. In the past, the choice of specific music was left up to the candidate for these audio recordings. On the other hand, live rounds are completely standardized for all regional band openings. The requirements, which may be found on the Air Force Bands Program website,<sup>22</sup> include all major and minor scales and arpeggios, a solo of choice, several excerpts from a list that is supplied, and sight-reading.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of MTAs.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Regional Band Tuba Player, interview by author, digital recording, Tucson, AZ, 28 May 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 7 June 2011.

<sup>22</sup> "Air Force Bands Program," February 8, 2010, accessed February 8, 2010, <http://www.bands.af.mil/careers/>.

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

As was mentioned previously, the United States Army has dramatically changed its audition process. In the past you would play a prepared solo, a number of scales, and some sight-reading from a packet that the music liaison supplied on the spot. The scoring was based on a 4.0 scale, though scoring a 4.0 was considered unrealistic. A 2.3 was the minimum score to be accepted into the Army band program. The current system now uses a forty-point scale, with a minimum score of eighteen for acceptance. Additionally, as was mentioned earlier, they have eliminated the scale portion of the audition. On the other hand, it has added a secondary instrument aspect. For all musicians, the secondary areas are singing and a second instrument or style of playing. For tuba players, this second secondary area is improvisation and ability to play jazz and brass band bass-lines. Other instruments have their own secondary skill besides singing. For example an oboe player is often asked to be able to double on flute. Since these areas are worth up to four points, candidates that do not command these secondary areas have their best possible score drop from forty to thirty-six. The secondary areas are then worth two points each, depending on the musician's proficiency. Solo music is also required, but, unlike the past, where the solo was one piece of the candidate's choice, now he/she is expected to play three shorter excerpts representing contrasting styles. While other auditions might consider contrasting music to be a lyrical and a technical piece or a modern and an older piece, the Army prefers that the candidate's contrasting pieces are something similar to a solo excerpt, a march/band excerpt, and a chamber (brass quintet) excerpt. The audition no longer contains sight-reading in a traditional sense. Now a packet known as a "quick prepare packet" is sent to the candidate within a day of the audition that he/she will be asked to play. The packet replaces the traditional sight-reading and will contain music,



such as marches, brass quintet, and concert band music, which could show up in their daily playing. It will also include the music that is asked if the candidate wants to qualify in one of the secondary areas. The minimum score to be accepted into the program is now eighteen out of forty.<sup>24</sup>

Auditions requirements for the United States Marines and the United States Navy have many similarities. Both include at least one prepared solo, all major and minor scales and arpeggios, and sight-reading. A change to Navy auditions is the elimination of a doubling requirement; the candidates were formerly required to display their ability to double on a second instrument (similar to what the Army now requires). This change makes the Navy requirements even more similar to the Marines than they were before.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Miscellaneous Audition Requirements*

Once the candidate has sent an acceptable audio recording, the United States Air Force requires that he/she speaks to a local recruiter to insure that he/she is physically and mentally able to enlist. Once the recruiter determines the musician is acceptable on those grounds, the band will then invite him/her to audition. It is important that the musician does not sign any papers presented to them by the recruiter until after he/she has won the position for which he/she is auditioning.<sup>26</sup>

The United States Army also asks candidates to go through an initial screening process.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>25</sup> "Navy Music Program," February 8, 2010, accessed February 8, 2010, <http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/navymusic/Pages/default1.aspx>.

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

### *Indoctrination (ASVAB, MEPS, Military and Musical Training)*

Like all typical enlistees into the military, musicians in regional bands are required to pass an initial screening process that includes a physical, a mental screening, and a job aptitude test called an ASVAB test.<sup>28</sup> This will take place at a Military Entry Processing Station (MEPS)<sup>29</sup> and will be set up by the local recruiter. Following the initial processing, all musicians assigned to regional bands must experience some form of initial training, like most newly enlisted personnel. The Air Force calls it Basic Military Training. The Army calls it Basic Combat Training. The Marines and Navy call it Recruit Training or boot camp. Once this initial training is over, Air Force musicians are sent directly to their bands while Army, Navy, and Marines are sent to Advanced Individual Training (AIT).<sup>30</sup> For all three of these branches, this takes place at the Armed Forces School of Music at the Joint Expeditionary Base in Littlecreek-Ft. Story, Virginia Beach, Virginia.<sup>31</sup> The Army has recently reduced its AIT requirement to ten weeks (from its original six month requirement). The Marines and Navy continue to require a six month AIT for its new musicians. Upon completion of this training, all musicians are then sent to their first duty station.

### *Life in the Band*

#### *Typical Band's Organizational Makeup*

The United States Air Force is currently in a condition of flux concerning its band program. In 2007, all bands were required to cut their personnel by 25%, going from roughly sixty musicians down to forty-five. Further cuts were announced in early 2012.

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix A for more information.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

The details of these cuts will be dealt with in greater detail under *trends* later in this chapter. Even with these changes, an Air Force band remains structured in a way similar to the pre-2007 bands. A typical band is very centralized. In other words, there is one commander over the entire band rather than multiple independent ensembles. In this case, all groups are more interconnected and come from one pool of musicians. There is no separate rock band, concert band, or ceremonial band; they all fall under the same command. Therefore, tuba players may be requested to play in any group that requires a tuba player. The ensembles that usually require a tuba are the concert band, ceremonial band, brass quintet, and maybe a Dixieland band or second-line brass band. The second-line brass band is a relatively new addition to the regional bands; all of the branches are experimenting with it. The group is related to civilian groups like Rebirth Brass Band and Youngblood Brass Band.<sup>32</sup>

The United States Army has also changed its basic organizational structure. In the past, all musicians were considered members of the band in general. So, even though a tuba player was a member of the brass band, he/she was also a member of all of the larger units including the concert band and the ceremonial band. The current bands break down into Musical Performance Teams (MPTs). MPT Alpha might be the ceremonial band, MPT Bravo might be the brass quintet and MPT Charlie might be the rock band.<sup>33</sup> Within the new structure, the commander is less of a conductor and more of an administrator, and musician's roles within the band are more relatively targeted, so that a tuba player usually plays only with the MPT to which he/she is assigned. Occasionally, however,

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<sup>32</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>33</sup> <sup>33</sup> Every MPT is assigned a letter to distinguish it from the other MPTs. These are usually assigned alphabetically so the third MPT is given the letter C. The military also then assigns a word to associate with that letter (A is Alpha, B is Bravo, C is Charlie, etc). Therefore, MPT Charlie is the third MPT in the band.

musicians may be requested to fill in for other musicians because of emergencies, as well as, at times when one MPT is particularly busy. Another change is to the size of each band. Depending on its responsibilities, each band is put in a category: Army Band Small, Army Band Medium, or Army Band Large. MACOM bands<sup>34</sup> and other larger base bands are given the title Army Band Medium. Bands at smaller bases are called Army Band Small. The premier bands are considered Army Band Large. The medium bands will have more personnel and contain more ensembles. For instance, these bands tend to include two brass quintets. Finally, the small Army bands no longer include double reeds and have only one euphonium.<sup>35</sup>

Each band in the United States Marines, as well as in the United States Navy, has a centralized structure similar to that of the Air Force. The band does make an effort, however, to staff their chamber groups with the most qualified musicians within that band. If the tuba player is particularly talented at playing bass lines and chord changes, then there is a good chance he/she will be put in an ensemble like the second-line brass band or Dixieland band. He/she may also be asked to play in an ensemble that is not their comfort zone because bands can assign musician responsibilities based on needs rather than specific talent.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix A for definition of MACOM.

<sup>35</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>36</sup> This information is based on a comparison of various answers that were given in both the United States Marine Regional Band Tuba Player interview and the United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player phone interview that can be found in Appendix B.

### *Typical Number of Tubas per Band*

Prior to recent cuts, the United States Air Force regional bands were billeted<sup>37</sup> two tuba players. Since the cuts, however, most bands have lost one of these tuba players. So most current rosters only have one tuba player.<sup>38</sup>

The United States Army bands contain a varying number of tuba players depending on the size of the band. The bands that are considered Army Band Small have two tubas. The Army Band Mediums are billeted three. See Chapter III for information on Army Band Large bands.<sup>39</sup>

Bands in the United States Marines are typically billeted three tuba players.<sup>40</sup>

The number of tuba players in a band in the United States Navy varies depending on the band's size. The smaller bands are billeted two tuba players. The larger bands typically are billeted four or five tuba players depending on the band.<sup>41</sup>

### *Musical Responsibilities of the Tuba Player*

Tuba players in regional bands must be versatile. Every musician needs to be capable of playing in many different styles, including classical, jazz, funk, country, and patriotic music. He/she also is often requested to play in many different groups. This includes concert and ceremonial groups, and also smaller groups like brass quintets, second-line brass bands, and Dixieland bands. Tubists also may be requested to participate in groups in a non-tuba playing capacity depending on their particular talents. Examples of what a non-tuba playing musical responsibility could include playing a

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<sup>37</sup> Roughly means the number of musicians assigned to the band. See Appendix A for a more thorough definition of a billet.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous United States Maine Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

different instrument, singing in the rock band, or serving as the master of ceremonies (MC) for a concert. In general, the bands that have fewer tuba players require more musical flexibility from the tubists. For example, the Air Force Regional Bands typically only have one tuba player. Therefore, tuba players in those bands play in every group that needs a tuba player. On the other hand, in the Army bands, tuba players are typically assigned to specific groups. So an Army tuba player in a brass quintet is usually not assigned to play in the concert band.<sup>42</sup> As for marching, the Navy and Air Force Bands tend to do less marching than the Army or the Marine bands, though with the Army's restructuring, the amount of marching can vary.

### *Travel*

The United States Air Force regional bands travel as a group about one weekend every other month. Further travel can be done by individual chamber groups but is minimized due to the number of available personnel. For example, if the brass quintet is on tour then there is no tuba player *in house* to perform the local responsibilities on base. In addition, the reduced sizes of the bands sometimes requires a given band to bring in outside personnel either from another Air Force band, or if that is not possible, from the civilian world. To bring in personnel from a different band requires what is called TDY<sup>43</sup> travel which tends to be much cheaper than hiring a full-time extra musician.<sup>44</sup>

Travel in the United States Army bands has increased with the new breakdown of MPTs. Now one MPT can do a short tour while the rest of the band can stay home to perform their base responsibilities. Travel is still rather limited, but could increase as the

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<sup>42</sup> This is a recent change. In the past, all tuba players were members of the large ceremonial band, and chamber groups came out of that band.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed description of TDY travel see Appendix I, but it is typically all expenses paid travel.

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

bands adjust to the new system, e.g., if MPT leaders decide to initiate greater travel for their groups. It is unclear how much the Army supports the idea of the bands having a higher level of travel for public relations in their missions, since travel also adds financial burdens.<sup>45</sup>

Regional bands in the United States Marines travel frequently. Unlike other branches of the military that tend to travel mostly with the smaller chamber groups, the Marine bands often travel as a full band. As the tuba player interviewed stated, “Most of the time it’s civilian street parades or city or town sponsored ceremonies.”<sup>46</sup> Because of this, much of the travel can be considered both public relations and ceremonial. While the band is performing as part of a community relations event, much of the music that is performed tends to be marches, national anthems, and other patriotic music, repertoires often associated with ceremonial performances.<sup>47</sup>

For members of the United States Navy bands, the amount of travel can vary greatly. Each band is, in part, a recruiting element of the Navy and assigned a specific region. The type of travel can range from ceremonial responsibilities like playing “Taps” for a military funeral to public relations performances such as giving a concert at an elementary school. The amount of travel, however, tends to vary from band to band and

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<sup>45</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>46</sup> This information comes from a conversation that was had in the fall of 2012 but was not part of the interview in Appendix B. In the conversation, this author asked a former Marine and current Fleet Navy Band service member about travel. In the conversation he was asked, “While you were in the Marines, how much travel did you do?” To that he said, “I traveled quite a bit but every band is different. They all have their own tour buses now so they have to travel to justify the huge expenses.” From that he was asked, “It sounds like it is often the entire band that travels and not just the chamber groups like a brass quintet.” His response was, “In the Marines that is true. In other services, not so much. [There are] various reasons for travel, but most of the time it is civilian street parades or city or town sponsored ceremonies. Marines play for the community more than the Navy...The Navy is by far the most efficient of the services and runs the program on a million (dollars) a year. The Navy does more gigs with less money and fewer rehearsals.”

<sup>47</sup> Anonymous United States Maine Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

group to group depending on that band's needs and the initiative of the ensemble leaders. Another element of travel for the Navy is travel abroad aboard a war ship. This is travel to non-combat zones. In fact, being deployed to a combat area is highly unlikely for Navy musicians. This travel is by ship as part of a diplomatic or public relations mission and it does not need to be taken by an ensemble that already is assembled. Groups are often created when no existing group is available. These tours are mostly voluntary and the reasons a musician will volunteer may vary from being single and having a desire to travel to needing more experience to aid in the musicians' work toward a promotion. The musicians have no responsibilities while on the ship except to play music.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Public Relations vs. Ceremonial Performances*

The United States Air Force regional bands perform more in a public relations capacity than in a ceremonial one. Ceremonial performances rarely include marching and are most commonly performed sitting down in a brass quintet. Any marching that a band might do is in an occasional parade, which in many ways could be considered just as much public relations as it is ceremonial.<sup>49</sup>

For the United States Army, the balance between public relations and ceremonial performances depends on what MPT group you are assigned, as well as the time of the year. If assigned to the rock band MPT, then the musician will give mostly public relations performances. On the other hand, the ceremonial band will have more ceremonial performances. There are times every year, however, when there is a high number of change of command ceremonies, which may require everyone to share in the

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<sup>48</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>49</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.



duties of the ceremonial band. Because of this, all musicians will participate in a certain amount of ceremonial performances and public relations performances.<sup>50</sup>

As with all of the other branches, the amount of public relations versus ceremonial work that the bands in the United States Marines do varies from one band to the next. Regardless of this, each band does a good deal of traveling which is often a good indicator of how much public relations work that band does. However, much of their travel in the Marine bands serves a dual purpose and can be considered both public relations as well as ceremonial. In reality, the Marines may do a lot of public relations performances but their ceremonial work is also extensive.<sup>51</sup>

The types of performances that the fleet bands in the United States Navy perform can vary greatly from one band to the next. For example, the Navy Band Great Lakes<sup>52</sup> performs a greater number of ceremonies because of their location at the Naval Service Training Command.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, the Navy Band New Orleans performs a great number of community events that would likely be considered public relations. Additionally, the size of the band also plays a major part in this. A concert for a university is more challenging for smaller bands that do not have enough musicians to supplant those on tour. Because every Navy band is assigned a geographical area of responsibility in a location that gives it a certain amount of uniqueness, there are always possibilities to supplement their regular responsibilities with public relations performances. Within that area, they are expected to perform all naval responsibilities, as

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<sup>50</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>51</sup> Much of this information comes from the correspondence that was mentioned in the earlier section on travel.

<sup>52</sup> Stationed at Great Lakes, IL.

<sup>53</sup> This is where all enlisted sailors go to complete their initial training, otherwise known as boot camp.

well as public relations duties within their limited budgets.<sup>54</sup> The budget constraints can also affect the amount of travel for public relations performances that a band can do, since most public relations concerts that require an overnight stay are rarely funded by the Navy.<sup>55</sup>

### *Collateral Duties (office work responsibilities)*

None of the regional bands have full-time administrative staff. Therefore most musicians are expected to have collateral duties. The one exception is the Navy's band program where the larger bands often do not require its lower rated/younger and newer musicians to have collateral duties, so that they may focus exclusively on mastering their instrument. In military bands, the higher rank/rating a person holds, the more leadership he/she will be expected to have, and the more collateral duties he/she will be required to perform. These duties are often tied to promotion in that the more collateral duties and experience a musician has in the day to day operations of a band, the more points he/she earns toward promotion.

### *Physical Training*

Most enlisted personnel, including musicians, are required to pass a semi-annual physical fitness test and weigh-in/body fat test.<sup>56</sup> This requirement is the same as the general requirements of that particular branch. Preparation of these tests varies from branch to branch and band to band. However, most regional bands either have daily organized physical training or at a minimum, musicians are released in some sort of

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<sup>54</sup> Approximately one million dollars for the entire Navy Band program according to the correspondence mentioned in the section on travel.

<sup>55</sup> Based on the Navy Band interview in the Appendix as well as the authors own personal experiences with hiring a Navy Band to perform. Budget considerations are not solely Navy issues. Money is an issue in travel for all branches. Anonymous United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>56</sup> The one exception is the Coast Guard Band. See the *Physical Training* section of Chapter III for more details.

organized fashion to exercise on their own. Failure to pass any portion of this test prevents you from having any favorable action taken on you until the test is passed. In other words, you may not be promoted or allowed to re-enlist until this test is passed. This is one of the things that can cause a musician to be discharged from the military. As a consequence, most bands take this part of being in the military seriously. When someone fails a test it not only hurts the musician that failed but also that musician's immediate superiors.

### *Deployment*<sup>57</sup>

The United States Air Force regional bands are deployable, though this rarely happens to an entire band. What is more likely is that a portion of the band, like the rock band, is sent for a short tour (60 to 180 days) to play for the troops and/or government officials. Minimum safety classes like weapon qualifications will be required prior to the tour. This training is uncommon for musicians otherwise. The groups that go on these tours serve in a purely musical capacity and the military training is solely for self-defense purposes.<sup>58</sup>

The United States Army bands are deployable. Until recently, deployments lasted up to a year, and any musician not in one of the higher-demand musical groups like the rock band or the brass quintet might perform secondary duties like security.<sup>59</sup> With the restructuring of the bands have come a few changes in the way deployments happen as

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<sup>57</sup> By deployment, the author is referring to whether or not it is possible for musicians in that branch to be sent to a combat zone. This deployment can be a chamber group being deployed for a short period with the USO or it could be a full band deployment for an extended period where playing music is minimal. For each band this is different and this section will try to define this for each branch.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>59</sup> This paper's author was deployed in 2003 and that deployment included a lot of security and escorting of Iraqis that were brought on base. On the other hand the brass quintet and rock bands were often asked to perform around the country and therefore were asked to do these duties less often.

well. The Army rarely sends an entire band on deployment now. Instead, they tend to send one or two MPTs and keep the rest of the band back in the home base. The musicians at the home base are augmented with musicians from a reserve band. Therefore, even though part of the band is deployed, the home base will still have a full-sized band able to perform. Another change is to the length of deployments of the bands, which has been reduced from one year to six months. This reduction is in the experimental stages, so whether or not it will remain in place is unclear. Each band still conducts regular combat readiness, such as weapons qualifications and field exercises.<sup>60</sup>

As members of the United States Marines, the musicians are often considered Marines first and musicians second. Therefore, most of the bands are as deployable as any other Military Occupations Specialty (MOS).<sup>61</sup> When bands are deployed they serve primarily as security forces for the camp to which they have been deployed. Musical opportunities are rare, and it is common for bands to not even take their instruments with them. Combat readiness training is a regular part of a musician's life even when there is no chance of deployment.<sup>62</sup>

Bands in the United States Navy do not deploy in a traditional sense. Musicians can volunteer to do a short tour with a small group of naval musicians on a trip to a non-combat region. These trips usually serve a diplomatic purpose and the musicians travel with dignitaries to the scheduled location on a military ship. While aboard, no extra-

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<sup>60</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix for more information.

<sup>62</sup> Anonymous United States Maine Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

musical responsibilities are expected of the musicians. Navy musicians participate in very little combat training.<sup>63</sup>

### *Trends*

The United States Air Force has been dramatically reducing its number of personnel, and the band program has not been immune. As was mentioned earlier, in 2007 every band in the Air Force was required to reduce its forces by 25%. This required that every regional band went from approximately sixty to forty-five personnel. In 2011, the Air Force announced another change. The Air Force Academy Band from Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado would no longer be considered a premier band. Even though their primary duties as a ceremonial and recruiting tool for the Air Force Academy has not changed, it is now considered a regional band. So because of this, musicians in the band must be willing to relocate periodically like other regional bands. Additionally, new military musicians entering the band in their first enlistment are not promoted to E-6 as is typical in most of the premier bands.<sup>64</sup> On March 6, 2012, the Air Force announced further cuts. In this announcement, The Air Force Band of Liberty at Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts, The Band of the Air Force Reserve at Robbins Air Force Band, and The Band of the Pacific-Alaska at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska were all deactivated. In addition, both the Air Force Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio and the Heartland of America Band at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska were downsized from forty-five members to fifteen.<sup>65</sup> That is a total loss of 195 Air Force

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<sup>63</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>64</sup> Anonymous Air Force Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 20 September 2011.

<sup>65</sup> "Air Force Announces Band Restructure; AFMC's Two Bands Impacted," Air Force Materiel Command, accessed September 20, 2011, <http://www.afmc.af.mil/news/story.asp?storyID=123292726>.

musicians. These cuts are to start in June 2013 and be complete by the end of September 2013. The specifics of these cuts were not announced. Speculation from current Air Force musicians is that certain musicians across the Air Force band field will likely not be allowed to re-enlist while others will be transferred to bands that are not being reduced. The bands with only fifteen musicians will be made up of a rock band and a brass quintet.<sup>66</sup>

The United States Army bands have been going through a significant number of changes. These changes may not be complete, particularly in the audition process and organizational structure. Most musicians are now expected to be competent in multiple areas in the audition. This would be their primary instrument and either alternative styles like being able to play chord changes on tuba or a second instrument like singing or playing bassoon. The Army also is significantly restructuring its band program. A number of bands have either moved or been deactivated. These changes are being implemented in an attempt to keep the band program more relevant to the needs and requirements of the modern military. One change in particular was to the bands in South Korea. As the Army tuba player interviewed said, “Korea was the black hole that made people rotate. Korea now can be a three-year tour and you can take your family over. That stops the rotation. Korea was the one thing in the Army bands that made people rotate.”<sup>67</sup> So, this restructuring may have had an unintended consequence of reducing the amount of movement from one band to another. Lastly, bands are also now organized in what are called Musical Performance Teams. This new system makes them much more

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<sup>66</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>67</sup> The musicians in the bands in South Korea used to only spend one year in Korea and could not bring their families.

capable of adapting to new mission requirements. Because of these changes, it is unlikely that an entire band would be deployed. When a band does get deployed, it is only one or two of the MPT's, and they are only deployed for troop moral/public relations tours. The Army band program will likely continue to change, but it is unlikely to be cut in any large capacity in the near future. It is too integral to the day to day life of the average military base.<sup>68</sup>

The United States Marines are probably the most stable of the bands. There was no indication in the interviews of major changes to the size or responsibilities of the Marine band program.<sup>69</sup>

The United States Navy band program is currently dealing with a greater level of budget constraints, although few specifics are known about what those constraints actually are. Based on the interviews with multiple Navy tuba players, the impression is that the bands will have reduced budgets. These types of cuts happen periodically, and the bands are prepared for them. Because of the relative size of the entire program and the demand for music in the Navy, any large cuts to personnel or band deactivation is unlikely to take hold in the near future.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Anonymous United States Army Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>69</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>70</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Fleet Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

## CHAPTER III

### OVERVIEW OF PREMIER BANDS

This chapter will look at the differences between each of the premier bands in a similar manner to the previous chapter. The two main sections discussed are the audition process and the life in the band. Within both sections there are several key areas. For the audition process, those areas will be the use of a pre-recorded round versus having an open call (otherwise known as a *cattle call*) style audition, the musical requirements of live round auditions, the weighting of the types of musical playing within the audition, military indoctrination, and any other miscellaneous aspects of the audition that may arise. The areas of a bandsmen's daily life that will be discussed are the band's organizational characteristics, the number of tuba players in each band, the operational tempo of that band, the amount of travel, the amount of public relations versus ceremonial performances, the role of collateral duties in a musician's life, the role of physical training and body image standards on a musician's life, other military requirements, the likelihood of the band being deployed, and future trends, if any.

To do this, the author will look at each topic and discuss how that band deals with that issue. The bands that are included in this chapter are: The United States Air Force Band, The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own," The United States Army Field Band, The United States Coast Guard Band, The United States Marine Band "President's Own," The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps "Commandant's Own," The United States Military Academy Band, The United States Naval Academy Band, and The United States Navy Band. Notably excluded from this list is the United States Air Force



Academy Band which recently lost its premier status.<sup>71</sup> The research for this chapter was similar to Chapter II. An interview was conducted with a tuba player in each band by this document's author and all answers come from those exchanges or follow-up correspondence. Also similar to Chapter II, because of requirements by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), special care is given to accuracy; however, the identity of those interviewed will be kept anonymous.

### The Audition

#### *Pre-recorded Round versus Open Call*

All premier band live auditions occur at that band's rehearsal hall.

The United States Air Force Band continues to use a pre-recorded preliminary round for all their auditions. The pre-recorded round for the most recent audition included a portion of the second movement of the *Concerto for Bass Tuba* by Ralph Vaughan Williams and three specified band excerpts. Along with excerpts, candidates are required to send a resume. The band invites any individual that is deemed qualified to the live audition rounds. There is no set number of individuals that will be invited. For example, the tuba player interviewed stated that thirty-seven candidates were invited to the live round audition that he/she won. On the other hand, the most recent audition had twenty-seven candidates invited. Of the twenty-seven, four were current regional band Air Force tuba players that were allowed to advance directly to the second live round. No one was hired for this position and a new audition was announced. The pre-recorded round for the new audition was the same as the previous one, and anyone invited to the first live

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<sup>71</sup> An interview with a tuba player in the Air Force Academy Band was performed and it is recommended that the reader refer to that interview in Appendix B for any questions that he/she may have.

audition was invited back to participate in the live audition again. No other privilege was given to these tubists.<sup>72</sup>

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” has recently changed their procedures. In approximately 2006, the band went from requiring a tape to having an open call. With the pre-recorded round, the band invited about twelve musicians and paid for their expenses. This change of procedure coincided with a new commander being assigned to the band. As with all military bands, the commander can often have a big influence on how the band works and what its priorities are. The new commander “decided that it would be better if we just went ahead and had everyone just show up and not pay for everybody to come. Then we could just do a live audition.”<sup>73</sup> In 2011, the band was again assigned a new commander, making it difficult to predict future audition procedures for the band, but it is unlikely the band would go back to a system that includes paying musicians to come and audition especially since the current trend in military auditions is for more of a *cattle call* system.<sup>74</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has always had a pre-recorded round and there are currently no plans to change that. In the past, the music included on pre-recorded rounds has been flexible and often left up to the person auditioning. The only stipulations were to have several contrasting band excerpts, as well as multiple contrasting solos.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 July 2011.

<sup>73</sup> Anonymous United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 20 September 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 July 2011.

The United States Coast Guard Band does not stick with any one type of audition. Recent auditions have used both preliminary round procedures, depending on the instrument and the musician running the audition. The last opening for tuba was in 2003 and the audition was a *cattle call*.<sup>76</sup>

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” has an open *cattle call* system in its truest sense. Any tuba player interested needs only to fill out an application form, and an audition packet and invitation letter is sent to that individual. The application is used primarily to insure that all candidates meet the basic age and citizenship requirements as well as helping the audition committee plan for the audition by informing them of the approximate number of musicians that will be arriving.<sup>77</sup>

For the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own,” auditions are run similarly to those of regional bands. One tubist in the band stated, “Auditions are continually accepted; however acceptance at the time of audition depends on the needs of the unit at any given time.”<sup>78</sup> In other words, if at the time of the audition, the drum corps has no openings, the tubist will either be put on a wait list or recommended to one of the regional bands.

The United States Military Academy Band uses a pre-recorded preliminary round. In addition to the tape, candidates are required to send a resume and full length photo. The most recent audition requested candidates to record the first movement of Paul Hindemith’s *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* plus a number of other contrasting recordings of

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<sup>76</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 11, August 2011.

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 26, March, 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 26 March 2011.

the potential candidate's choice. Once the recording is accepted, the current system requires candidates to have a preliminary conversation with a recruiter to insure he/she is qualified to be in the military. At that point if all is passed, candidates are sent an invitation letter to the live audition along with other pertinent materials.<sup>79</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band uses an open *cattle call* audition system for all auditions and has since at least the mid-1990s (when the most senior tuba player in the current band enlisted).<sup>80</sup>

The United States Navy Band formerly required a recorded round.<sup>81</sup> The most recent tuba audition, however, did not. In this audition, interested musicians sent a resume and a letter of interest to the band and based on these results, candidates were invited to audition. When the candidate agrees to come to the audition, he/she is assigned a time slot on the day of the audition.<sup>82</sup>

#### *Musical Requirements in Live Rounds*

The United States Air Force Band may require a solo or allow the individual to pick their own solo. They also may opt to not use a solo. Past auditions offered no list for the individuals to prepare prior to arriving at the audition. However, recent auditions have changed. Now, the Air Force is much like the other premier bands as they provide a packet that includes music that is to be prepared before arriving. This packet is placed on their web page so that anyone may access it (including civilians). This also guarantees all candidates an equal amount of time to prepare music. Auditions will also include sight-

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<sup>79</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 24 August 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 26 September 2011.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview by author, digital recording, 26 February 2011.

<sup>82</sup> This information is based on the experiences of this paper's author.

reading and small ensemble playing (duet, trio, quartet, or quintet). Tuba players may also be required to march with a sousaphone and a percussionist while playing a brief portion of a march. It is also possible that this march may need to be memorized.<sup>83</sup>

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” typically allows the person auditioning to pick one solo of his or her choice and then the band assigns another solo or etude to prepare. In the first round, each candidate will perform these solos. A prepared packet of band excerpts is not usually part of the audition. Instead, band excerpts are used as sight-reading in the later rounds.<sup>84</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has required several different solos for past live round auditions. These solos were picked by the band in advance of the day of the audition and included in a packet with any other required musical excerpts. There was no indication of what round would include the solos. In addition to the solos, the person auditioning would receive a list of excerpts from orchestral transcriptions and original music for band. Finally, he or she would likely be requested sight-reading in one or more rounds of the audition. No ensemble playing has occurred in previous auditions.<sup>85</sup>

The United States Coast Guard Band typically has three rounds and requires a solo or etude along with band excerpts. Sight-reading is also typical. Later rounds may include ensemble playing, depending on what the tuba player may be expected to do once the job is won. Previous auditions have included playing Dixieland style bass-lines.

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<sup>83</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>84</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>85</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

Because the current band does not use a tuba for this ensemble, it also does not require this type of ensemble playing in the audition.<sup>86</sup>

Audition materials have changed for the United States Marine Band “President’s Own” in the past twenty years. Prior to this, the audition was almost entirely sight-reading from band literature and no audition packets with excerpts were sent to candidates. Some of the literature used in these auditions was well-known, while others were taken from the band’s extensive personal library of unpublished arrangements and original compositions. The current tuba player that was interviewed talked about the current system, saying, “Nowadays we have a list of prepared excerpts, I think about ten or fifteen prepared excerpts that go out to the applicants. They practice those before they come in and we do listen to the prepared stuff plus a solo of your choice and then we get into a little bit of sight-reading as well.”<sup>87</sup>

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” requirements are similar to an audition to a regional Marine Band. The candidates are required to perform at least one prepared solo, all major and minor scales, and sight-reading. The sole difference is that the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps require a higher score. As such, many candidates that audition for the drum and bugle corps may be assigned to a Marine regional band because the drum and bugle corps might not have an opening. In addition, even though the drum corps plays on bugles in the key of G, auditions are typically done on CC, BB-flat, E-flat, or F tubas. Once the tubist is in the band there is a six month probationary period where he/she will be expected to learn the bugle. If he/she fails to meet the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps standards, then the

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<sup>86</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>87</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

musician will be processed out to other Marine occupations. The most common destination is a regional fleet band.<sup>88</sup>

The United States Military Academy Band requires a solo that is often the same solo from the pre-recorded round. Other than that, the audition is entirely band excerpts. The later rounds include sight-reading (especially of various military marches) and a significant amount of ensemble playing.<sup>89</sup>

Most auditions for the United States Naval Academy Band involve excerpts and a solo that is assigned by the band. The excerpts will mostly be from the band literature, but may also include a small number of orchestral parts as well. In addition, band excerpts are used for both the prepared portions of the audition and for the sight-reading, which is not a part of the audition packet's list of music to prepare. There are usually at least three rounds and possibly a fourth *super-final* round. It is standard practice to make the first two rounds blind with the committee sitting behind a curtain. The final round is not blind. The dropping of the curtain coincides with an interview portion of the audition process. In addition, most of the auditions for the band, including the last two tuba openings, involved playing within the section.<sup>90</sup>

Auditions for the United States Navy Band usually involve one or two short excerpts from solos or etudes that are assigned by the band. Nearly every other part of the audition involves band excerpts including sight-reading. As with most of the other premier bands, a packet is created with a number of band excerpts that are required.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>89</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>91</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

### *Weight of Each Aspect of the Audition*

The United States Air Force Band emphasizes the need for “a good musical overall package.” Prepared excerpts are a big part of this along with sight-reading which is often used to help weed out individuals that do not fit their needs. Ensemble playing may also occur in the later rounds as well as the possibility of a required sixteen-bar memorized march performed while marching with a snare drummer.<sup>92</sup>

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” does not require any particular prepared band or orchestral excerpts. The only prepared repertoire is a solo of the candidate’s choice and a solo assigned by the band. Sight-reading is a major factor in auditions for the band and much of the sight-reading is band excerpts.<sup>93</sup>

The United States Army Field Band emphasizes being a complete player rather than one who is particularly good at sight-reading or any other individual characteristic. According to a current tuba player, the weighting is about 50% prepared music and 50% sight-reading. As the interviewed tuba player stated,

I think what we are looking for, when we are hiring someone, is for them to be well-rounded in every area. If they can play the heck out of a march but they can’t play a slow lyrical etude then they are no good to us. If they can sight-read the John Williams Tuba Concerto and play it well but they can’t read a standard band excerpt that they have never seen before then that is no good for us either. So, I wouldn’t say that they need to be absolutely amazing at every aspect of playing but they need to be super solid in all aspects of tuba playing.<sup>94</sup>

The United States Coast Guard Band has included ensemble playing on previous auditions, but the majority of the audition uses prepared music and sight-reading.

Emphasis is not toward either type of playing. However, poor sight-reading can be out-

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<sup>92</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>93</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>94</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.



weighed by the prepared music, provided the tuba player can at a minimum sight-read with the proper style for the music and that the prepared music is superior to the others auditioning.<sup>95</sup>

Band excerpts are by far the largest portion of the audition for the United States Marine Band “President’s Own.” However, unlike some of the other bands, the Marine Band usually asks its candidates to prepare a brief portion of a solo of their choice. This is usually the first thing requested in the first round of the audition. The rest of the audition is band excerpts. While the first round of the audition rarely has sight-reading, the later rounds will include an increasing amount of it. In general, the Marine Band is considered to put more weight on sight-reading than most of the other premier bands.<sup>96</sup>

As was previously covered, the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” does not require ensemble playing or excerpts. Their audition evenly splits solos, scales, and sight-reading.

For the United States Military Academy Band, the vast majority of the audition involves band excerpts. There is a small amount of solo music that could be assigned as well. Sight-reading is required, but it seems to be a small portion of the audition. Ensemble playing, on the other hand, appears to be weighted higher than other auditions.<sup>97</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band has slowly been changing the ratio of sight-reading and prepared music in recent years. In the past, the band used a significant

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<sup>95</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>97</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band, phone interview.

amount of sight-reading but recent auditions have put more emphasis on the prepared portions. As the interviewed tuba player stated,

We have started to dial back the sight-reading a bit because, simply put, we just don't read that much. I mean, we might do some things on short preparation so the ability to learn something quickly and having a lot of material under your belt when you get here is important but the ability to just sit down and blow it down is not really at the top of the list anymore.<sup>98</sup>

One solo is usually assigned by the band for each audition. The most recent tuba audition was in 2001 and the second movement of James Grant's *Three Furies for Solo Tuba*<sup>99</sup> was the assigned solo. Playing within the tuba section is also common, but as with many of the auditions that use ensemble playing, it is a relatively small portion of the audition and occurs in the later rounds. The final round often involves an interview with the leadership elements of the band.<sup>100</sup>

Based on the most recent audition, the United States Navy Band does not use sight-reading in the opening rounds. However, later rounds usually include sight-reading, and once inserted into the audition, it is a heavily weighted part of that particular round. As was previously stated, other than the predetermined solo that may be assigned, all prepared and sight-reading music is based on band excerpts.<sup>101</sup>

#### *Miscellaneous Audition Requirements*<sup>102</sup>

Other than the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps "Commandant's Own," all auditions for premier bands are blind for at least the first live round. Often auditions are blind for the entire process or at least until the final round. However, there

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<sup>98</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>99</sup> Grant, James. *Three Furies* (Tempe, AZ: Potenza Music Publishing, 1993)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>102</sup> Because some band's auditions are more straightforward than others, not every premier band will be included in this section.

is no standard for this; bands often change how much of the audition is blind based on who is in command of the band or who is actually in charge of that particular audition.

Additionally, many of the bands incorporate an interview into one of the later rounds of the audition to ensure that the candidates that have reached that point are not only compatible with the other musicians in the band, but also compatible with life in the military. As the interviewed United States Coast Guard tuba player stated, “This is because just being a good musician isn’t enough. Not everyone is cut out to be in the military. There is a structure to military life that not everyone is prepared for.”<sup>103</sup> If the interview goes well, the band also checks references.<sup>104</sup>

The United States Air Force Band’s audition process also requires all candidates to meet with a local recruiter prior to the live round in order to conduct a short evaluation to ensure that the candidate is qualified for military service physically and mentally. They emphasize for the candidate not to sign anything at this evaluation as this experience comes before actually being offered the position in the band. Candidates for the live rounds are usually assigned a time slot for their audition. The Air Force Band audition can also involve a small amount of marching while playing a brief portion of a standard march on BB-flat sousaphone. This portion of music may also be requested to be memorized. In 2012, there were two auditions for the Air Force Band (the second one was because they did not hire anyone in the first audition). Both auditions required candidates to be prepared to march and play sousaphone, though neither mentioned the memorizing aspect.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Anonymous United State Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

In the past, the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” required a candidate to see a recruiter to insure he/she was medically and physically qualified to be in the military prior to being officially invited to a live audition. This is no longer the case and any person interested in auditioning can wait to do that until after he/she is accepted.<sup>106</sup>

The United States Army Field Band is the only band whose audition process has changed little over the years. Based on the results of a pre-recorded round, a small number of candidates are invited to the live audition which usually has three rounds. One big difference between this band and other premier bands is that this is the only band that continues to pay for the traveling expenses of auditioning candidates. This is likely because the number of invited candidates is much smaller than any other premier band, making the cost relatively manageable.<sup>107</sup>

The only miscellaneous aspect of the United States Marine Band “President’s Own” is that its “cattle call” audition is first come, first serve. The earlier a candidate arrives to audition, the earlier their audition happens.<sup>108</sup>

There is no music that would be helpful to prepare prior to auditioning for the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” because all of their music is original or arranged specifically for the drum corps. Furthermore, all music is memorized in all of their performances. So an ability to memorize quickly may be an important ability for members of the group, but that is not currently tested in the audition.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>107</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>108</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>109</sup> Anonymous United Stated Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

All relevant information for the United States Coast Guard Band, United States Military Academy Band, United States Navy Band, and United States Naval Academy Band's audition process has been stated earlier in this chapter.

*Military Indoctrination (MEPS and initial training)*

All enlisted personnel (including all premier band personnel) are required to pass every test at MEPS including the ASVAB test and physical. Along with that, there is a contract-signing and a swearing-in ceremony that all newly enlisted have to do. After completing MEPS, all premier band musicians are required to go to basic training, recruit training, or boot camp (depending on the branch of service) except those who are joining the United States Marine Band "President's Own" or the United States Coast Guard Band. The musicians in these bands do not have to go to recruit training. Instead, each musician heads directly to their band after winning the position.

Basic training for the United States Air Force may include performing in the basic training drum and bugle corps at parades and graduation ceremonies.<sup>110</sup>

In the past, the United States Coast Guard Band did not require basic training. As such, all training took place at the band. The musician was given a packet and provided one-on-one help with a current member of the band. However, most training was done through trial and error.

The band also includes one musician stationed at the Coast Guard's boot camp at Cape May, New Jersey. His/her primary responsibility is to organize a band of new recruits at the Coast Guard's recruit training. This band is primarily responsible for performing graduation ceremonies at Camp May. Contact between the boot camp band

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<sup>110</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

and the premier band is minimal even by the musician in charge. Recently, however, the Coast Guard Band has begun sending all new band members to the boot camp band for a two week orientation program that is meant to train them on anything he/she may need to know militarily once with the Coast Guard Band. The one exception is marching, which is still learned on the job if necessary.<sup>111</sup>

As was stated earlier, musicians joining the United States Marine Band “President’s Own” do not have to go to Marine Corps Recruit Training. Musicians do still have to complete and pass all portions of the MEPS processing. Upon completion, musicians immediately move to Washington D.C. and begin a month long in-house military band training to prepare them for military requirements, like recognizing ranks, as well as the musical requirements such as the timeline and maneuvers for various military ceremonies.<sup>112</sup>

Prior to the live audition, the United States Military Academy Band requires all candidates to go through a preliminary MEPS review. Then once the audition is won, the tubist must go through the full MEPS processing that the rest of the military also completes. In addition, all musicians must go to Basic Combat Training at one of the standard five locations.<sup>113</sup> He/she then has a ten-day transition before being expected to arrive for duty at West Point, NY. All other training and in-processing is done on the job.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>112</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>113</sup> Those locations are: Fort Benning, GA; Fort Jackson, SC; Fort Leonard Wood, MO; Fort Sill, OK; and Fort Knox, KY.

<sup>114</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

Both the United States Naval Academy Band and the United States Navy Band require its musicians to complete Navy Recruit Training, otherwise known as boot camp. Once that is complete, the musician travels to the band where he/she in-processes with the band. At that point, the musician has a small amount of on the job training that is completed under the supervision of a mentor within the band. Whenever possible if there is a ceremony or other event that might be foreign to the musician's prior experience, the musician will observe multiple performances of that event before being assigned to perform in one of them.

### Life in the Band

As was the case with the regional bands in the previous chapter, the premier bands have a number of similarities, but also some distinct differences.

#### *Band Organizational Characteristics*

Premier bands organize in two different ways: either they have one centralized group with musicians assigned to ensembles from that group, or they have several smaller groups and musicians are assigned solely to one of those groups. In the former, a tuba player is assigned to the band in general and if there is a concert band or ceremonial band performance, he/she may be assigned it as the band requires. In the latter, a tuba player is usually assigned to either the concert band or the ceremonial band and tends to stay with that group.

The United States Air Force Band separates its band into six main ensembles, the Airmen of Note, the Ceremonial Brass, the Concert Band, the rock group known as Max Impact, the Singing Sergeants, and the Strolling Strings. Any musician that is joining the band will audition for one of these specific smaller bands and upon arriving will join the

ensemble that he/she auditioned for. Of these groups, the only ones that use tuba are the Ceremonial Brass and the Concert Band. Most of the time these ensembles stay separate. However, occasional intermingling of personnel is possible. For example, a tuba player in the Concert Band may occasionally be requested to perform with the Ceremonial Brass in order to help them meet their daily requirements. Smaller ensembles come directly from within each particular group. For example, there are brass quintets in both the Ceremonial Brass and the Concert Band.<sup>115</sup>

Even though the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” technically has one commander for the entire band, in actual practice the band breaks up into smaller groups that are run by separate officers and have separate personnel. In other words, even though there are nine tuba players in the band, not all of them are considered to be in the same group. There are several large groups, and two have tuba players in them: the Concert Band (four tuba players) and the Ceremonial Band (five tuba players). The formation of smaller chamber groups, however, is not based on the lines of those larger ensembles. For example, the brass quintet has musicians in it from the Ceremonial Band, the Concert Band, and the Army Blues Jazz Ensemble. Furthermore, ad hoc groups are often created to help the band fulfill its commitments.<sup>116</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has four parent ensembles that all can divide into smaller groups, but not all of these parent groups include tubas (like the Soldier’s Chorus). The Concert Band has more chamber groups including three brass quintets (one for each tuba player in the band) and is also the group that all tuba players are assigned. The Concert Band takes precedence over all chamber performances. As such the

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<sup>115</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>116</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.



overwhelming majority of all performances that a tuba player does are with the Concert Band. The quintets are mainly used for community outreach programs like high school and university master classes which are done on a rotational basis, meaning all three brass quintets rotate the jobs that come up that will use a brass quintet. Because of this, it is likely that a brass quintet will only perform about a dozen times a year.

The United States Coast Guard Band has one parent group, the Concert Band. All other musical groups come out of that group. For a tuba player there are two smaller groups that require a tuba, the brass quintet and a ceremonial group that uses twenty-one musicians including one tuba player. As of this writing, the tuba player in the brass quintet plays in the quintet and the concert band. The other two tuba players play in the Concert Band and take turns playing in the ceremonial group. The ceremonial group may be required to march, but that is not its sole purpose. In fact, the band as a whole has been required to march less and less to the point where a current musician only marches approximately five times a year. The band had an active tuba-euphonium quartet, but that group no longer exists.<sup>117</sup>

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” is a centralized organization. All tuba players are assigned to the band in general. Chamber groups tend to be set with the same personnel but on occasion they can be formed spontaneously for specific performances. Ceremonial performances tend to involve a Ceremonial Band that may march and the Marine Band rotates tubas players into these band performances so that every tuba player plays in them evenly.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>118</sup> Anonymous United States Marine “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” does not have chamber or auxiliary ensembles. The size of the performing ensemble may fluctuate, depending on the venue and type of performance, but this does not affect the organizational structure.<sup>119</sup>

The United States Military Academy Band, as with all the academy bands, has a unique set of requirements. The Military Academy is at West Point, NY and is the Army’s premier officer training location. The band is therefore primarily responsible for the musical requirements at the academy. The band’s tubist stated that the band,

is comprised of...three ensembles. There is the Concert Band which has about fifty to sixty people in it. Then there is the Hell Cats and that’s the drum and bugle corps<sup>120</sup> which has maybe ten people in it. And then there is the Jazz Knights and that’s the jazz band/ big band. All of us together minus the Hell Cats do anything that is marching band.<sup>121</sup>

All tuba players are therefore part of the Concert Band and the larger Marching Band. From these large ensembles, the official chamber groups are created. Each tuba player in the band is placed in the Concert Band and then is assigned to a brass quintet and a tuba/euphonium quartet.<sup>122</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band is billeted<sup>123</sup> sixty-four enlisted musicians and two officers, making it the smallest premier band in the military. The musicians are all part of one group that is then broken into smaller ensembles. All members are a part of one band and are assigned in whatever way is necessary to meet the needs of the current missions. Because of this, all musicians in the band must be

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<sup>119</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>120</sup> The Hell Cats are made up of trumpeters and drummers playing on traditional drums and bugles. They are primarily a ceremonial unit that assists the day to day operations of the Academy by playing things like Reveille.

<sup>121</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of a billet.

versatile with their job. The band's responsibilities can change quickly and being a flexible member of the band both musically and professionally is a requirement.<sup>124</sup>

The United States Navy Band separates its musicians into three categories. The first group is the section leaders and non-marching instrumentalists. They are considered permanent stage musicians and do little to no marching. The rest of the band is divided into *A Band* and *B Band*. These two halves of the band rotate between stage and ceremonial work. Official chamber groups are filled with the same personnel and rotating players into these groups is not common. Furthermore, the chamber groups are not manned by personnel from the *A* or *B* Bands separately. If the group has an opening, they hold an audition within the band and anyone can audition. So the chamber groups often use musicians from *A Band*, *B Band*, and permanent duty personnel. As the interviewed tuba player stated,

That's one of the difficult things about the concert and ceremonial division is the constant juggling of personnel depending on the needs of the Navy Band. So, sometimes somebody will have to come off of "A" Band to fill in for a ceremony for somebody on "B" Band so the "A" Band guy can do a brass quintet concert or all the guys in the tuba-euphonium quartet are either permanent stage or "B" rotation.<sup>125</sup>

#### *Number of Tuba Players in the Band*<sup>126</sup>

The United States Air Force Band is billeted six tuba players. Two are in the Concert Band and four are in the Ceremonial Band.

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<sup>124</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>125</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>126</sup> Even though much of the information in this section can be found in the interviews at the end of the paper, a current roster for all the bands can be found on each band's individual web pages.

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” has nine tuba players that split into two groups. In the current setup, four tubists play in the Concert Band and five in the Ceremonial Band.<sup>127</sup>

The United States Army Field Band is billeted three tuba players.

The United States Coast Guard Band is billeted three tuba players.

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” is billeted seven tuba players.

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” has six tuba players playing on G bugles.<sup>128</sup> On any given performance they may use between two and six contra players depending on the type of performance. Their marching drill uses all six contra players, but not all performances are drill shows.<sup>129</sup>

Until recently, the United States Military Academy Band was billeted three tuba players. With the recent cuts mentioned in Chapter II, the band had to reduce that number to two.<sup>130</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band is billeted three tuba players.

The United States Navy Band is billeted five tuba players.

### *Operational Tempo*<sup>131</sup>

Because the United States Air Force Band works hard to keep each larger ensemble in the band as independent as possible from the other larger ensembles, it is likely that operational tempo is also independent. The Concert Band, for example, has only two tuba players and both are expected to play on every Concert Band concert. In

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<sup>127</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>128</sup> These tubas are called contrabass bugles and are abbreviated as contra.

<sup>129</sup> Anonymous United Stated Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>130</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>131</sup> Operational tempo is the business of the band.

addition each band breaks into smaller chamber groups like brass quintets. The combination of these ensembles keeps all tuba players busy. The Ceremonial Brass has four tuba players, but the number of tuba players required for any given performance can change and rarely requires all four to perform on any given performance. Because of this, a limited rotation of personnel is possible. However, a complication to this is the fact that this group needs to be able to march, so a greater number of physical ailments may make a person temporarily unable to perform (or be put on profile<sup>132</sup>). As with all military bands, the Air Force has a high number of ceremonies that it is responsible for, and the author concludes that, the end result is that the tuba players in the Ceremonial Brass have an equally high level of operational tempo as the Concert Band tuba players.<sup>133</sup>

The work load for the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” is probably higher than any other band in the military. This is partially because they are also the largest band in the military; but even per musician, the number of performances is more than any other band. Besides the number of musicians, the fact that they are also responsible for most of the ceremonies in Arlington Cemetery is also a contributing factor in the quantity of performances. They are also the most versatile. Several groups, like the Herald Trumpets, cannot be found in any other band in the military. In addition, because of the band’s size, they tend to be the default band for any performance that does not require a specific band. In other words, if it is not specifically supporting a function for the Navy or some other military branch and the other bands cannot do it, then the

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<sup>132</sup> See Appendix A for description.

<sup>133</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

“Pershing’s Own” Band will do it by default. In fact, “the band takes a certain amount of pride in being there when nobody else can be there.”<sup>134</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has three tubas and all are expected to be in all Concert Band concerts (assuming there is nothing medically or emergency oriented to prevent them from being able to perform). Because of this, there is no rotational capability for the section. It is true that the brass quintets can and do perform on a rotating basis and this does provide a small amount of relief. But since the band exists primarily as a traveling ensemble, the operational tempo remains high for all the tuba players.<sup>135</sup>

In the United States Coast Guard Band, all tuba players perform with the Concert Band on every concert. The current chamber groups only require a tuba player for the brass quintet and a rotational tuba player for a twenty-one piece ceremonial group. Because of the band’s home station and the fact that they are the only band in their branch of service, their operational tempo is probably comparable to the Washington D.C. bands, but with the addition of certain amount of overnight traveling.<sup>136</sup>

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” is the first band called for all Marine performances within the Washington D.C. area, as well as all performances associated directly with The President of the United States, as long as that performance is not affiliated with a different branch. In addition, the band annually spends all of October on tour. As such, the band’s overall operational tempo is higher than average. The

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<sup>134</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>135</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>136</sup> Anonymous United State Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

number of tuba players and rotational system that the band uses aids in making this schedule more manageable for all of the tuba players.<sup>137</sup>

As was previously stated, the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” travels frequently. This travel can be around 150-200 days a year and average between 60,000 and 75,000 miles a year. In addition, even the administrative staff tends to travel with the band in a somewhat more flexible capacity. Because of this even if a tuba player is not performing in a particular concert, he/she is still on the road. In other words, their operational tempo is high for similar reasons to the United States Army Field Band, as a consequence of the amount of travel that they do.<sup>138</sup>

As an academy band, the United States Military Academy Band has unique responsibilities that other premier bands do not. For example, bands at academies are required to play at all home college football games along with other notable away games like the annual Army/Navy game. The band maintains a heavy performance schedule, and the tuba players are seeing an increase in its requirements since their numbers have been reduced. The schedule also varies throughout the year. Some months allow more concerts than others, but the band’s mission is primarily to the cadets and to the Academy, making operational tempo equally related to their schedule. Busy times of the year for the Academy often means busy times for the band.<sup>139</sup>

Because the United States Naval Academy Band is a relatively small band compared to the other premier bands, it is very active. All members need to maintain a high level of musical and collateral duties for the band to meet its needs. Even though the

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<sup>137</sup> Anonymous United States Marine “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>138</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>139</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

group is stable and runs smoothly, it is dependent on the musicians being willing and able to be versatile. The limited amount of travel that the band does aids this, but like the United States Military Academy Band, the Naval Academy Band has an operational tempo that is related to the Naval Academy's tempo at any given time of the year.<sup>140</sup>

Because the United States Navy Band separates itself into *A* and *B* bands, this allows the band to have multiple performances simultaneously. With that said, the operational tempo usually varies depending on whether the musician is in the Ceremonial Band or the Concert Band that week. The Ceremonial Band, which often plays a lot of the same music from one concert to the next, often rehearses less and performs more. The Concert Band often rehearses more for only one or two concerts. As the interviewed tuba player stated, "often times, the numbers of services are the same but the number of performances are different because of what you're playing."<sup>141</sup> This is complicated by the chamber groups. The Ceremonial and Concert Bands take precedence over these smaller groups and if, for example, The Navy Brass Quintet has a performance at the same time as *A* Band, then personnel from *B* Band may need to fill-in for any personnel that are in *A* Band that are in The Navy Brass Quintet. These conflicts increase the workload of the entire band.<sup>142</sup>

### *Travel*

As a preliminary to this section, it is useful to note that The Department of Defense separates the country into five zones. The United States Air Force Band, The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own," The United States Coast Guard Band, The

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<sup>140</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>141</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.



United States Marine Band “President’s Own,” and The United States Navy Band then rotate through these areas of responsibility on their annual tours.

The United States Air Force Band has two three-week tours each year. In addition, large ensembles and smaller chamber groups regularly go on brief trips for events like music conferences. The total travel for the band is approximately two months out of the year. The toll of this travel is minimal because so much of it is spread out in short tours.<sup>143</sup>

Travel for the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” is affected by the reality that there is another non-academy premier band in the United States Army (The Field Band) and that band’s responsibility is almost exclusively tours and public relations performances all across the country. The consequence is that extended trips are not common for the “Pershing’s Own” band. They do travel, but it is often in support of specific events and usually does not involve the entire band. These trips are usually shorter (two or three days long) and allow a portion of the band to stay at the home station and support functions throughout the national capital region “...which extends all the way from Fort Hamilton, New York down to Norfolk or Fort Lee, Virginia.”<sup>144</sup> Beyond these shorter trips occasional extended trips may be scheduled, but the band does not have a budget that allows for these trips to be regularly occurring events.<sup>145</sup>

The United States Army Field Band is primarily a traveling military band. Its main mission is as a traveling unit and as such it travels about 100 days a year. The only band (premier or otherwise) that travels more than the Field Band is the Marine

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<sup>143</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>144</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid

“Commandant’s Own” Drum and Bugle Corps. The level of travel can sometimes take a toll on retention rates which can be worse than the other premier groups.<sup>146</sup>

The United States Coast Guard Band has an unusual situation since it is not an academy band, but is also not based in the Washington D.C. area. Just like their Washington D.C. counterparts, however, The United States Coast Guard Band tours each year. The tour is usually two weeks in length. Whenever possible, they try to visit a part of the country that the other bands are not visiting. Because of where they are stationed and the fact that they are the only band in their branch, this is not always possible. In addition, overnight trips to the Coast Guard Academy and other places around the country are common in order to meet the needs of the Coast Guard.<sup>147</sup>

The amount of travel in the United States Marine Band “The President’s Own” is above average. The band has a month-long trip in October. This trip usually involves half of the band’s personnel. In addition, chamber groups are encouraged to go on short trips at their personnel’s discretion as long as it does not impede the band’s day to day operations.<sup>148</sup>

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” travels approximately 150-200 days a year. This makes it the most widely traveled of all musical groups in the military, premier band or not.<sup>149</sup>

For the United States Military Academy Band, extended travel is somewhat rare. Short trips with the full band or chamber groups are possible. In fact, the band has several regularly scheduled trips, like the Army-Navy football game that is played annually in

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<sup>146</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>147</sup> Anonymous United State Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>148</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>149</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but there are no regularly scheduled extended tours. In general, travel is probably lower than the other premier bands.<sup>150</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band does very little travel, probably less than any other band. Its primary responsibility is to aid the academy in its daily life and as such the band has no requirement to take part in recruiting for the academy directly that can often add to the travel of other academy bands. The band does no regular touring and beyond occasional two or three day trips to conferences no musician travels more than approximately ten days a year.<sup>151</sup>

Traveling for the United States Navy Band is on par with an average premier band. The biggest portion of this travel is from a three-week tour, usually in the spring, that involves the full band. Further travel is possible, though these trips tend to be smaller and bound by the Navy's budget constraints. Occasional longer trips are possible, especially diplomatic missions to other countries.<sup>152</sup>

#### *Public Relations vs. Ceremonial Performances*

Because the United States Air Force Band's personnel are assigned to specific ensembles, the ratio of public relations concerts to ceremonial concerts is dependent upon which group is performing. The Ceremonial Brass performs mainly ceremonial performances and the Concert Band performs primarily public relations concerts, although this is not exclusively the case. Many of the Concert Band's performances are a part of an official function and they often play marches and other music that might be associated with ceremonial functions. On the other hand, the Ceremonial Brass might be

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<sup>150</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>151</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>152</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

requested to play music for a sporting event or a parade. These performances can be considered public relations and are often high profile performances. The result is that while the Concert Band may be considered more of a public relations group and the Ceremonial Brass may be considered more of a ceremonial group, that is not a strict rule.<sup>153</sup>

For the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own,” the ratio of ceremonial music to public relations performances is difficult to quantify. This is primarily because of the nature of many of their ceremonies. For example, they are responsible for many of the ceremonies in Arlington Cemetery, like performing “Taps” at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier during every wreath laying ceremony. These performances certainly are ceremonial in function. However, their high profile nature and the fact that the audience that is listening is made up of more civilians than a typical military ceremony also lends itself to be considered in part, a public relations performance. Therefore, it is often difficult to decide whether many performances are public relations or ceremonial in nature. In the end, the band does an equal amount of both.<sup>154</sup>

Most of the United States Army Field Band performances are done on tour. So although they do play ceremonial performances, most of the performances are more public relations in nature. Except for performances like the Presidential Inauguration and a few other ceremonies that arise, most ceremonies are performed sitting down and involve no marching. In addition, these ceremonies are usually performed by smaller groups, like a brass quintet.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>154</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>155</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

About half of the United States Coast Guard Band performances are ceremonial and half are public relations in nature. The ratio varies throughout the year. Late spring has graduation at The Coast Guard Academy and the majority of the Change of Command Ceremonies. During other times of the year there is more time to perform specifically for the public. So, the overall ratio is even between public relations and ceremonial performance.<sup>156</sup>

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” performs a high amount of both ceremonial and public relations performances. The tuba player interviewed felt that approximately forty percent of its performances are ceremonial at their core. The majority of these performances are with the Ceremonial Band.<sup>157</sup>

The majority of the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” performances are ceremonial, but according to one member of the Corps, “every performance is considered PR or diplomatic.”<sup>158</sup>

Because of its association with the Military Academy at West Point, NY, the United States Military Academy Band has a high number of ceremonial performances, such as reviews, that non-academy premier bands rarely participate in. The ratio of concerts to ceremonies is also affected by the time of the year. That said, the number of ceremonial and other marching performances is probably higher than most of the other

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<sup>156</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>157</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>158</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

premier bands even if many of the performances, like “Reveille,”<sup>159</sup> do not require tuba.<sup>160</sup>

The United States Naval Academy Band has a very even split between the types of performances it does. For a tuba player in the band, “it’s about thirty percent concert band, thirty percent ceremony, twenty percent marching, and twenty percent (brass) quintet.” As the tuba player interviewed stated,

There is a lot of a grey area. I mean, there are community relations performances but what you are doing is playing ceremonial music by reading down the Sousa book. Now, do the people love it? Is it a community relations performance? I would say yes but in my mind, it’s a ceremony. Not to put words in your mouth but I think a more succinct question is how much are you creating art and how much are you...? I think I probably make art about fifteen percent of the time.<sup>161</sup>

Because of the division of the United States Navy Band into a rotating *A* and *B* Band, the amount of concert and ceremonial work depends on which part of the rotation the musician is on at any given time. The overall amount of ceremonial performances for the band is higher than the number of concert performances, but the time requirement is comparable. Since the band rotates personnel, most musicians have a similar workload.<sup>162</sup>

#### *Collateral Duties (office work responsibilities)*

It is either recommended or required that all musicians in the premier bands perform collateral duties. These duties are usually tied to promotion. In other words, most of the bands do not compete with the rest of their branch’s regional band musicians for promotions. The only way for promotions to happen is from within the band, if someone

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<sup>159</sup> This is a bugle call that is sounded as a “wake-up” call. For the West Point Band, this responsibility along with all other similar bugle calls is handled by The Hell Cats Drum and Bugle Corps which has only drums and trumpets.

<sup>160</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>161</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>162</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

of a higher ranking retires or otherwise departs from the band. This opens a slot for that rank within the band that is filled with a lower ranking person deemed most qualified. Once that position is filled, it creates a cascading effect within the band where one person will move up in each rank until all the higher ranks have the numbers that they are allowed to have. Since collateral duties are a major way to distinguish oneself, performing these duties is necessary.

Although the United States Air Force Band does have a small number of full time support staff, these personnel are also required to be musicians and are expected to be able to occasionally fill in to meet the musical needs of the band. Additionally, all full time musicians in the band are expected to have collateral duties and the Air Force Band makes a priority to rotate these collateral duties around in order to ensure that musicians continue to “broaden” themselves.<sup>163</sup>

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” has a full staff of approximately 39 civilian and military personnel working in offices to keep the band functioning. Collateral duties are not required by any band member, but many musicians in the band perform them.<sup>164</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has 47 administrative assistants (more staff than any other premier band currently has). Because of this, none of the members of the Field Band are required to have collateral duties, but most do in order to have a better chance at promotion.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>164</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>165</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

Unlike most of the premier bands, the United States Coast Guard Band has no administrative staff. Therefore, all band personnel must do collateral duties in order for the band to function properly. Additionally, the more time spent in the band means a higher rating, and the higher rating means more responsibility and less daily time to play music. Because of this, good time management is important.<sup>166</sup>

The United States Marine Band “President’s Own” has approximately twenty-two support staff personnel. That allows the musicians to have a relatively limited role in the administrative side of the band. However, the upper enlisted musicians still have a number of responsibilities. These administrative requirements are usually related to the band and its personnel from a band management standpoint such as performance reviews and leading sections.<sup>167</sup>

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” has an administrative staff largely made up of musicians from within the band that are temporarily assigned full-time administrative duties. However, all members of the drum corps are expected to do collateral duties and they consider themselves to be “self sufficient.”<sup>168</sup>

The United States Military Academy Band has a small number of support staff (approximately 8 people). However, all musicians are required to undertake multiple collateral duties that include assisting the support staff with their office duties. These duties may change throughout the musician’s career.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Anonymous United States Coast Guard Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>167</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>168</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>169</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.



In the United States Naval Academy Band, no one is required to do any collateral duties, especially early in their career. With that said, most do. The reason for this is a program that the Navy started called PTS or Perform to Serve. With this program the Navy evaluates all sailors (not just musicians). In PTS, the sailor is evaluated not only based on what you do in your primary job, but what else you do to aid the band. These evaluations take place against all the musicians of the Navy, not just within the individual premier bands. Within the Navy's regional bands, most musicians have collateral duties, especially by the time he/she reaches E-6. So, comparing the non-musical aspects of a tuba player's job that is E-6 in a regional band to a tuba player that is E-6 in one of the premier bands is a difficult task. Yet it happens and PTS is used to determine whether a sailor is allowed to re-enlist. So, no one is required to do collateral duties, but if he/she does not, it is likely that the musician will eventually lose their ability to re-enlist at some point in their career.<sup>170</sup>

The United States Navy Band has about 18 administrative staff. Most musicians still serve as assistants to the chiefs within their assigned section. In addition, there are section leaders and other collateral duties that more directly affect the music and musicians within the band. So in general, musicians ultimately have multiple collateral duties.<sup>171</sup>

### *Physical Training*

All premier bands except the United States Coast Guard Band have physical fitness and weight/body fat requirements that coincide with the rest of their branch requirements. The Coast Guard has a semi-annual weigh-in, but no physical fitness tests

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<sup>170</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>171</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

are administered to band members. For all other branches, there is a semi-annual fitness test. In other words, since the Army requires its enlisted personnel to complete a two mile run within a certain time limit, then the premier band musicians in the Army are also required to meet that standard. The Air Force Band also offers an incentive to individuals that pass the physical fitness test with a score of 90 or higher. Those individuals only have to take the fitness test once a year. Unlike the regional bands for most of the branches, none of the premier bands have organized daily physical training to prepare for this test. It is all done on an individual basis. The only exception to this is when a person fails any portion of the fitness test or fails the weigh in/body fat test. In that case, the bands have some sort of remedial program that may include daily group training until the bandsmen retakes and passes the fitness test. Failing the test multiple times is one of the ways that someone (whether he/she is in a premier band or not) can be discharged from the military. Furthermore, the bands are very conscious of how much they are in the public's eye and as such portraying themselves as a model military musician is a priority. As a tuba player in the Air Force Band said, many people that see the band "listen with their eyes."<sup>172</sup> Because of all of this, the premier bands and their commanders take fitness and body image very seriously. It is not unheard of for musicians to be pulled out of the performing rotation by the commander because the musician appears to be out of shape (whether he/she actually is or not) and not put back in until their image improves.<sup>173</sup>

### *Military Training*

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps "Commandant's Own" is the only premier band that performs regular military training such as weapon's qualifications

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<sup>172</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>173</sup> This information is based on information from multiple interviews which may be found in Appendix B.

in any traditional sense. That said, all the premier bands take some annual classes, such as sexual harassment and internet security.

### *Deployment*

The United States Air Force Band is deployable, but it is unlikely that the band as a whole would ever get deployed. Typically a smaller group like the Max Impact rock band might be sent on a six-week USO tour of various bases in a combat zone. Any group participating in one of these deployments will go on a two to four week training session for self protection and first aid prior to the trip.<sup>174</sup>

The United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” is the only Washington D.C. premier band that has been deployed. That full-scale deployment happened in World War II, but brief tours have been made by smaller chamber groups to Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. In addition, after the Pentagon attack on September 11, 2001, the band was used to help secure the area surrounding the Pentagon. In other words, the band can be deployed, though a large scale deployment of the band is unlikely in the near future.<sup>175</sup>

The United States Army Field Band is deployable, but it has not been deployed in any traditional sense. They do on occasion send chamber groups on brief “goodwill tours” to both combat and non-combat regions to entertain the troops.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>175</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>176</sup> This is based on a follow up to the interview when the author asked, “Is your band deployable in the traditional sense? Do you deploy in a less traditional capacity (for example, a small chamber group going with a USO tour)?” To that the Army Field Band Tuba Player replied, “The band can be deployable but has never been to my knowledge. We do overseas goodwill missions such as military tattoos though. We have recently sent our rock/country group ‘The Volunteers’ over to Iraq for a two week tour to entertain the troops. I am not sure if it was organized through the USO or not. That info is out of my lane. The bottom line is that we are not exempt from being deployed. If we were, we would probably pull a security detail or something like that.”

The United States Coast Guard Band does not get deployed. This is a consequence of the responsibilities of the Coast Guard itself. The Coast Guard's responsibilities are, for the most part, in and around the various waterways within the United States, so just as members of the entire Coast Guard rarely get deployed, the same is true of the Coast Guard Band.

The United States Marine Band "President's Own" has no secondary mission and is therefore not deployable.<sup>177</sup>

Because of their operational tempo, the United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps "Commandant's Own" is not deployable as an entire unit. However, if deployed, their combat mission would be as "Barracks and Capital security." In addition, they are expected "to support augmentations for the National Capital Regional Task Forces."<sup>178</sup> Because of this, the drum corps has sent at least two Marines for each of these missions. While on these missions, the musician is considered rifleman. No Marine is deployed strictly in a capacity of their daily job. They have a saying, "We are Marines who happen to be musicians, not musicians who happen to be Marines."<sup>179</sup>

The United States Military Academy Band is not deployable in any traditional capacity because of its primary role as a supporter of the cadets at the academy.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> This information comes from e-mail correspondence with the Marine Band tuba player that was interviewed on 26 March 2011 and is based on those responses. In that correspondence, the tuba player was asked "Can your band be deployed? If so, what capacity does that happen? Full band? Chamber group? Thirty days? Six months? With a USO tour? To Forward Operating Bases?" His response was, "We don't deploy. We have no secondary tactical mission. The concert tour every October is within a section (varies by year) of the lower 48 states and lasts 31 days. The band has traveled overseas, but the last time was to Switzerland in 2001."

<sup>178</sup> What this is exactly is not readily available; however, based on the name it is likely dealing with training to secure the national capital area.

<sup>179</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>180</sup> Based on correspondence between this paper's author and a tuba player in the band following the interview conducted on 26 September 2011.

The United States Naval Academy Band is not deployable for a number of reasons. First, the Navy band program in general does not deploy any of its bands. Plus, the band's academy duties would make deployment unrealistic, especially considering the relatively small size of the band as it compares to other premier bands.<sup>181</sup>

The United States Navy Band is not deployable. In fact, the entire Navy band program is not deployable in a traditional way.<sup>182</sup>

### *Trends*

In 2006, the Air Force decided to reduce its work force by approximately 40,000 airmen. Because of this, the United States Air Force Band (and all the regional bands) was expected to cut 25% of its personnel. The band met this requirement mainly by putting a freeze on all hiring until enough people had retired or separated from the band. The small number of musicians has increased the amount of outside hiring that the band uses. In other words, if the band does not have the needed number of personnel for a particular concert it may either hire from the civilian world or do what they call a manning assist. This means that they bring in a musician from a different Air Force Band to play for an agreed upon amount of time (perhaps one concert, recording session, or short tour). This increases the amount of money for individual musicians in relation to travel costs of the band, but reduces the overall budget of the band since it does not have the full-time position anymore.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>182</sup> This information is based on a number of places including the interviews in Appendix B with the Navy Band tuba player, the Naval Academy tuba player, and the fleet band Navy tuba player as well as follow-up correspondence with the interviewed Navy Band tuba player. In that conversation the author asked, "Is the Navy Band deployable? If so, in what capacity?" To that he replied, "As far as the Navy Band be deployable, I do not believe that it is."

<sup>183</sup> Anonymous United States Air Force Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

With the cuts in the military budget and the winding down of both wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States Army Band “Pershing’s Own” has had its budget reduced, but there is no current talk of losing personnel or their premier status.<sup>184</sup>

The United States Army Field Band has had no reduction in staffing. In fact, they actually have added support staff in the past decade. There is no indication that the band will be reducing personnel any time soon and there is no indication of a loss of their status as a premier band either. On the other hand, money is a concern as it is with all military bands. Bands are under heavy scrutiny to justify the money that they receive. So although it is possible that the band may have financial concerns, those concerns are always there, and they feel as though if they continue to do their jobs and justify their existence then they will have little to worry about.<sup>185</sup>

Unlike the other military bands, the United States Coast Guard Band does not belong to the Department of Defense. Instead it falls under the Department of Homeland Security. Because of this, any budget issues that the DOD has do not directly affect the United States Coast Guard Band. Whether the DOHS decides to parallel the DOD is unclear. There are a number of rumors about the band, but nothing reliable. As it stands, The United States Coast Guard Band is “traditionally known for doing more with less” and they are preparing for the future with the number of billets that they currently have.<sup>186</sup>

Unlike the other bands, the United States Marine Band “President’s Own” does not seem to be downsizing in any way. In fact in 2004, the band actually increased in size

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<sup>184</sup> Anonymous United State Army Band “Pershing’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>185</sup> Anonymous United States Army Field Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>186</sup> Anonymous United State Coast Guard Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

by adding 12 new billets. Furthermore, since it is directly associated with the President of the United States, the odds of it being downgraded are minimal.<sup>187</sup>

The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” fluctuates within about 10 musicians at any given time, but if there are plans for permanent changes to the drum corps’ current number of personnel, whether growing or diminishing, the individual musicians are not aware.<sup>188</sup>

The United States Military Academy Band has added or replaced a number of positions within the band. However, recent budget cuts have forced the band to cut multiple positions, including one tuba position. These cuts are the most recent mentioned in this document and it is unclear if other cuts are forthcoming.<sup>189</sup>

Until recently, the United States Naval Academy Band was the only premier band that began its new members at E-5. That has changed and now each musician begins at a pay grade of E-6 like the other premier bands.<sup>190</sup> However, the band went through brief scares in 1993, 2010, and at other points periodically throughout its past. The 1993 scare came from a proposal by former Senator Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) to the Armed Services Committee to eliminate all academy bands and replace them with bands comprised of midshipmen and cadets from within the academies. In 2010, at approximately the same time the Air Force Academy was losing its premier status, the Naval Academy Band nearly lost its premier status. Although none of these scares fully materialized for the

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<sup>187</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>188</sup> Anonymous United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>189</sup> Anonymous United States Military Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>190</sup> See Appendix A for information on pay grades.

Naval Academy Band, and there is no current danger of these scares returning in the near future,, the band's budget remains tenuous.<sup>191</sup>

There are no current plans to change the United States Navy Band from its current size or responsibilities.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Anonymous United States Naval Academy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

<sup>192</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Band Tuba Player, phone interview.



## CHAPTER IV

### SURVEY OF BAND EXCERPTS AND OTHER RELEVANT AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Because of the prestige associated with premier bands, the remaining chapters of this document will focus on what these bands look for in a tubist during an audition. As the previous chapters mentioned, band excerpts are by far the highest weighted portions of all auditions. The majority of all materials sent to a candidate to prepare are band excerpts. Additionally most sight-reading is also band excerpts. Therefore, determining what excerpts are most used and what the potential premier band audition committee is looking for in these excerpts is vital to any person desiring one of these positions.

#### Respondents

The first step was to discover what pieces are requested in these auditions. To determine this, a list of current and prior service premier band tuba players was compiled. Every tuba player from this list was then mailed a survey.<sup>193</sup> Of the approximately 48 surveys that were sent out, 6 were completed and returned for a 12.5% return rate. Despite the low return rate, the data was deemed acceptable because every person that returned a survey was considered an expert in this field, thereby increasing the weight of their answers. Furthermore, their responses corresponded greatly with each of the recent premier band auditions as well as corresponding with one another's responses. Because of this, the data was accepted as accurate for use in this study.

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<sup>193</sup> In some cases contact information for musicians in the premier bands was not available because of security reasons. In these cases, rather than mailing the tuba player directly, copies of the survey were sent directly to the band and from there they were distributed to the tuba players. This likely contributed to the low return rate.

## The Survey

The focus of the survey<sup>194</sup> was primarily to determine what band excerpts were most important to a typical audition. However, follow up questions were added to allow responders leeway to expand the survey beyond band excerpts. This was done since most premier band auditions focus on performing band excerpts, but the audition often can include other music such as a solo, ensemble playing, and orchestral excerpts. There are also questions aimed at understanding why the music on the returned survey is there and what the premier band is looking for when they request it.

## Procedure

Because of the uniqueness of each premier band, the method of contacting a respondent varied from person to person. In some cases, respondents were contacted by phone. In other cases, he/she was contacted through e-mail. When contact information was unavailable, a respondent was contacted indirectly through the band. This method proved unreliable and was only used as a last resort. Regardless of the method, when contacting a respondent, an introduction was given explaining the purpose of the survey as well as the confidentiality of all information as to specific identities. Through this conversation, a best method on contact was determined and a survey was sent. As such, some surveys were mailed and some were e-mailed. Additionally, returned surveys followed a similar path.

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<sup>194</sup> See Appendix D for a copy of survey.

## Results

In addition to the results of the survey, all required materials for every premier band audition from March 2010 to July of 2012<sup>195</sup> were then added to the respondent's answers. This is because of the direct relationship between the requirements of these auditions to the requirements of future auditions.

*Results of Question 1: What are the twenty-five most important excerpts to know when auditioning for a premier military band? Include original works, marches, and transcriptions. For transcriptions, please include arranger's name to eliminate confusion with multiple arrangements of the same work.*

In the first question, musicians were requested to list what he/she felt was the twenty-five most important works to know when preparing for an audition in the premier bands. In some cases, musicians chose to list more than the requested number and in other cases, musicians listed less than twenty-five. As was mentioned in the previous section, the excerpts for music from the most recent auditions were then included in the results, which are listed below. These results are sorted first numerically by number of times the work was listed on an audition or survey, then alphabetically by composer, and title of work.

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<sup>195</sup> This date was picked because it is also when research for this dissertation began and when the surveys were sent out. During that timeframe, there were four premier band auditions. In chronological order, they were: the United States Marine Band, the United States Air Force Band (this audition resulted in no one being hired), the United States Navy Band, and the United States Air Force Band again. The author of this document participated in each of these auditions and this is a factor in how these lists were obtained. However, the information for most premier band auditions is posted online and is available to anyone who wants the information.

Table 1

*List of Band Works from the Results of the Military Band Survey*

Work	Composer	Times Listed
1. Lincolnshire Posy	Grainger, Percy	10
2. Stars and Stripes Forever	Sousa, John Philip	10
3. Toccata Marziale	Williams, Ralph Vaughan	9
4. Symphony in B flat for Band	Hindemith, Paul	8
5. First Military Suite in E flat	Holst, Gustav	8
6. La Forza Del Destino	Verdi/Lake	8
7. Oberon Overture	Weber/Lake	8
8. Celebration Overture	Creston, Paul	7
9. Fingal's Cave	Mendelsohn/Seredy	7
10. Third Symphony	Barnes, James	6
11. Thunder and Blazes March	Fucik/Laurendeau	6
12. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture	Glinka/Winterbottom	6
13. J'ai été au bal	Grantham, Donald	6
14. Bartered Bride Overture	Smetana/Safranek	6
15. Roman Carnival Overture	Berlioz/Safranek	5
16. Symphonic Dances from West Side Story	Bernstein/Polster	5
17. Second Military Suite in F	Holst, Gustav	5
18. Barnum and Bailey's Favorite	King, Karl	5
19. Russian Sailors Dance	Gliere/Leidzen	4
20. Les Preludes	Liszt/Brown	4
21. Eternal Father Strong to Save	Smith, Claude T.	4
22. Planets (Mars and Jupiter)	Holst, Gustav	3
23. Variations on "America"	Ives/Schmann	3
24. Dance Folatre	Smith, Claude T.	3
25. 1812 Overture	Tchaikovsky/Laurendeau	3
26. Hungarian March	Berlioz/Lake	2
27. Birds of Thunder	Bliss, John	2
28. Joyce's 71st Regimental March	Boyer/Lake	2
29. Academic Festival Overture	Brahms/Safranek	2
30. Circus Bee	Fillmore, Henry	2
31. Marching Song of Democracy	Grainger, Percy	2
32. March from "Symphonic Metamorphosis"	Hindemith, Paul	2
33. Hammersmith	Holst, Gustav	2

Table 1 (continued).

Works	Composer	Times Listed
34. Mazeppa	Liszt	2
35. Fackeltanz	Meyerbeer, Giacomo	2
36. Marriage of Figaro Overture	Mozart	2
37. Pictures at an Exhibition	Mussorgsky/ Hindsley	2
38. A Centennial Overture	Nixon, Roger	2
39. Fountains of Rome	Respighi/Odom	2
40. Sensemaya	Revueltas/Bencriscutto	2
41. Donna Diana Overture	Reznicek/Meyers	2
42. Scheherazade	Rimsky-Korsakov/Hindsley	2
43. Italian in Algiers	Rossini/Cailliet	2
44. Chester	Schumann, William	2
45. Festival Variations	Smith, Caude T.	2
46. George Washington Bicentennial March	Sousa, John Philip	2
47. Circus Polka	Stravinsky, Igor	2
48. Flying Dutchman	Wagner/Laurendeau	2
49. Siegfried Fantasie	Wagner/Seidel	2
50. Der Freischutz	Weber/Moses-Tobani	2
51. Euryanthe Overture	Weber/Safranek	2
52. Purple Carnival	Alford, Harry	1
53. Skyliner	Alford, Harry	1
54. Suite of Old American Dances	Bennett, Robert Russell	1
55. Le Corsaire Overture	Berlioz/Beeler	1
56. Beatrice et Benedict	Berlioz/Henning	1
57. Espana Rhapsodie	Chabrier/Safranek	1
58. Boys of the Old Brigade	Chambers, W. Paris	1
59. Universal Judgment	De Nardis/Cafarella	1
60. Florentiner March	Fucik/Lake	1
61. An American Salute	Gould, Morton	1
62. Gumsuckers March	Grainger, Percy	1
63. In Storm and Sunshine March	Heed, J.C.	1
64. Colas Breugnon	Kabalevsky/Hunsberger	1
65. Melody Shop	King, Karl	1
66. Fingal's Cave	Mendelsohn/arranger not specified	1
67. Barber of Seville	Rossini/arranger not specified	1
68. Dionysiaques	Schmitt, Florent	1

Table 1 (continued).

Work	Composer	Times Listed
69. Dance Movements	Sparke, Phillip	1
70. Cloudsplitter Overture	Stamp, Jack	1
71. Caprice Italien	Tchaikovsky/Laurendeau	1
72. Manzoni Requiem	Verdi/Mollenhaur	1
73. Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral	Wagner/Cailliet	1
74. Die Meistersinger	Wagner/Moses-Tobani/Kent	1
75. Rienzi Overture	Wagner/Patterson	1
76. Crown Imperial	Walton, William	1

*Question 2: Is there any particular solo music that an individual should know when auditioning for a premier military band?*

Four tuba players answered this question and three provided specific music. The list of works that were mentioned is

Edward Gregson	Concerto for Tuba
Paul Hindemith	Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano (cadenza from third Movement)
Krzysztof Penderecki	Capriccio for Solo Tuba
Anthony Plog	Three Miniatures
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Concerto for Bass Tuba
Rolf Wilhelm	Concertino for Tuba and Wind Ensemble

One respondent gave a short answer rather than listing specific music. That person said, "Nothing in particular, but when a solo is asked, the individual should pick something that emphasizes how great they play and sound over how difficult the piece is

to execute. In other words, a Snedecor etude<sup>196</sup> played well will beat a marginal performance of the Penderecki *Capriccio*<sup>197</sup> every time.”

*Question 3: What characteristics are most important to you when looking for a prospective tubist auditioning for a military band?*

The answers for this question were similar to the answers for the second question in that all but one respondent gave a brief list of various characteristics with the other respondent giving a brief essay. The first respondent stated, “A full sound that is clear, yet flexible in every range of the instrument.” The second said quality sound and pitch that will fit in the section/band, a strong sense of time and rhythm, confidence and skill playing a variety of musical styles, a team player because “if the finest player is a jerk, NOBODY will want to work with them,” physical fitness and appearance well within standards is necessary, and consistent superb performer giving a sense of total control and mastery of the instrument. A third respondent echoed the second responder adding sound that will blend with the section, excellent intonation, and solid sight-reading ability. The final respondent again overlapped the previous statements. He/she said, “The characteristics are virtually the same as with an orchestra, except we put more weight on sight-reading. We want to hear good rhythm and time, intonation, tone quality, expressive playing when appropriate, attention to style, accents, and dynamics. Sight-reading is very important because we do it a lot on the job.”

To summarize all of the answers, it appears that the premier military bands are looking for a number of qualities, many but not all of which parallel the civilian orchestral world. Combined together, these characteristics make a solid musician that can

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<sup>196</sup> Snedecor, Phil, *Low Etudes for Tuba* ( North Easton, MA: Robert King Music, 1996).

<sup>197</sup> Penderecki, Krzysztof, *Capriccio* (Mainz, Germany: Edition Schott, 1987).

consistently play anything that is put in front of them. In particular, a clear blending tone within a section of tubas, excellent rhythm, and control over the entire range of the instrument are important. In addition, sight-reading is one area that is emphasized in many premier bands. Consequently, auditions often include performing unprepared music. Finally, beyond all of the musical aspects of the premier bands, a new musician needs to be mentally and physically prepared for life in the military. This includes physical fitness and being a team player in both performing aspects of the military bands as well as non-performing aspects that come along with the job.

*Question 4: Please voice any additional comments and/or concerns below.*

There were three responses to this question. The first respondent wrote about being flexible with tempi, being prepared to play with a section that may include trombones and euphoniums in the finals, being prepared for an interview in the later rounds, and being “ready to take the gig. Dress neatly and dignify the search, especially in the finals.”

The second respondent stated, “One point I would like to make is that the decision to hire a player rarely comes down to who took a breath in a particular spot, or who left certain notes out to breath. We, that play in the band, leave out notes all the time to breath and it is okay to do that in an audition as long as it makes sense musically and the time stays straight.”

The last respondent stated,

People should know that they are auditioning to be in a section. Not principal! While there are times a player may be in an exposed setting, mostly they are in the section. In the military environment, a strong work ethic and a high level of professionalism are very desirable. As far as the band literature goes, the repertoire is constantly evolving, with the ‘old warhorses’ seeing less and less



action. Also, different service bands favor some composers over others: for instance, the USAF band seems to play a good deal of (James) Barnes and (Claude T.) Smith and the USMB rarely performs those composers.

### Conclusions from Survey

Based on the results of this survey, several conclusions can be made. First, every musician must be prepared for the non-musical factors of the audition and of the realities of day to day life in the military if offered the position. Auditions often include an interview to ensure that the candidate is prepared for the physical and mental requirements of being a member of a large professional military band. The second conclusion is that, as was stated in the introduction, a significant amount of music in any audition will be band music. However, there are occasional non-band works that are required. Some are original orchestral works while others are solos that could be up to the candidate or pre-selected by the band.

The third conclusion is more extensive and requires a closer look. The list from the results of Question 1 included seventy-six works that received at least one vote: twelve traditional marches, twenty-five original works for band, and thirty-nine transcriptions of works for other mediums. These categories can be divided even further by age of composition. Twelve of the twenty-five original band works are older than 1948 and seven of the other thirteen pre-date 1990 meaning that the majority of the original works are over twenty years old. This would seem to contradict one survey response that stated that the old war horses are seeing less playing time, at least in an audition setting. As for the orchestral transcriptions, eight predate the 1835 invention of the tuba, twenty-five are nineteenth century works written after the tuba's invention, and the final seven are twentieth century works. The relative age of many of the works on this

list likely has more to do with the general repertoire of each military band rather than a specific quality that a particular band is looking for. In other words, since little original band literature predates the twentieth century, it makes sense that there are many nineteenth century transcriptions for band. This is especially true considering how popular nineteenth century music is to the general public. In addition, many of the transcriptions were written in the first half of the twentieth century when original band literature was still in its infancy.

So, why then is one work requested more often than another? Based on responses to the final three questions and the author's own score study, the answer to this can vary from work to work. In some cases, the work is requested because it is played regularly. In other cases, the work is requested because it addresses a difficulty more directly than any other work. A work can also be listed because it involves more than one difficult aspect of playing. Based on interviews for Chapter III, we know that committees like to create an audition list that is challenging but not unplayable. Asking too many difficult works can lead to poor audition results where no one is hired. Therefore, asking works that address more than one playing difficulty is common and desirable as it allows committees to create a shorter list of required excerpts to know and still cover all the aspects of tuba playing that the committee might be looking for. Because of this, it is recommended that anyone preparing a piece of music for an audition start by determining why that particular work is requested and focus on that characteristic.

Based on personal study and correspondence with premier band tuba players, there are five main aspects of playing that premier bands look for in a prospective tubist:

1. The ability to play soloistically
2. Rhythmic and metronomic accuracy
3. Low register playing
4. Quality of tone throughout the range of the instrument
5. Technical clarity in fast passages throughout the range of the tuba

In the next chapter, these aspects along with others will be looked at more directly by examining the necessities to preparing and performing a select number of top works from the results of Question 1's survey. The goal will be to show how these works are all unique, as well as how they overlap in some of their requirements.

## CHAPTER V

### SELECTED EXCERPTS WITH PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

#### Introduction

As was mentioned at the end of the last chapter, there are five skills that are vital to master when auditioning for a military band. These skills are:

1. The ability to play soloistically
2. Rhythmic and metronomic accuracy
3. Low register playing
4. Quality of tone throughout the range of the instrument
5. Technical clarity in fast passages throughout the range of the tuba

This chapter will explore these aspects of tuba playing by looking more closely at ten works from the survey. These works, listed alphabetically by composer's last name, are: *Third Symphony* by James Barnes; *Russlan and Ludmilla Overture* by Mikhail Glinka, arranged by Frank Winterbottom; *Lincolnshire Posy* by Percy Grainger; *J'ai été au bal* by Donald Grantham; *Symphony in B flat for Concert Band* by Paul Hindemith; *First Suite in E flat for Military Band* by Gustav Holst; *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite* by Karl King; *The Stars and Stripes Forever* by John Philip Sousa; *Toccata Marziale* by Ralph Vaughan Williams; and *Oberon Overture* by Carl Maria von Weber, arranged by Mayhew Lake. These ten works also represent the three genres of band music that typically appear on auditions: original works for band, marches, and transcriptions.

#### Tuba Excerpt Examination

Each excerpt will be presented in its entirety in the order listed above followed by this author's comments on preparation and performance of the excerpt will be presented

based on personal study and e-mail correspondence with several current and retired premier band tuba players. For each excerpt three questions will be answered:

1. What section(s) of the work are requested?
2. Why is the section requested?
3. How should a tuba player approach learning the excerpt?

Before proceeding, based on the interviews, e-mail correspondence, and military band experience, a few points need to be made relative to the equipment used to learn these excerpts. First, the premier bands either prefer or require that tubists use their contrabass tuba for performing the band excerpts in an audition. In fact, it is not uncommon for the audition packet to include a statement that requires the tubist to play the entire audition on one instrument. If this is not stated, other horns may be used; however, the contrabass tuba is preferred. Second, in addition to the band excerpts, a solo may be requested. In some cases, the solo may be supplied or left up to the candidate. In either case, the tuba again is often not specified. If possible, performing the solo on contrabass tuba is convenient and allows the easiest transition into the band excerpts. Finally, since most current professional and advanced tubists in the United States use a CC tuba as their primary contrabass tuba, any references to intonation tendencies, fingering patterns, or other equipment issues will be referring to this instrument.

*Third Symphony-James Barnes*

**Lento**  $\text{♩} = 66$

3 4 one solo 5

*mp doloroso*

9 *mf* *mp cresc.*

14

18 *f* *dim.* *rall.* 24 *a tempo* *p*

25 *mf* *p* *mf*

31 *a tempo* *p* *mf*

Figure 1. Third Symphony Opus 89 (S692) by James Barnes; Movement 1, Tuba Part, Measures 1-34. Used by permission of the copyright owner, Southern Music, P.O. Box 329, San Antonio, Texas 78292 © 1997 Southern Music Company.

The first work included in this chapter is James Barnes' Third Symphony. After a short timpani introduction, the tuba enters and plays an extended solo with the timpani providing a rhythmic pulse for the long notes of the solo. These 34 measures represent the primary excerpt in the piece. Furthermore, because this solo demonstrates control of *rubato* and musical interpretation, it is often requested in auditions even by bands that rarely perform the work.

This excerpt is requested for a number of reasons. First is the previously mentioned *rubato*. Beyond that there are issues with *legato* playing, breath control,

musical interpretation, rhythmic accuracy, and intonation. Before preparing the solo it would be helpful to have an overall concept. Unfortunately, since the symphony is a recent work, only two recordings are commercially available—one by the United States Air Force Band, produced by Southern Music; the other, by the Japan Ground Self Defense Concert Band, produced by Fontec Inc. The first movement is almost 15 minutes long by itself, and the tuba solo is the first melodic statement. The solos in both of these recordings have several differences in interpretation. Some of these differences will be covered later in this section.

Once a general concept has been reached, the player can move on to learning the excerpt. The majority of the solo is *legato* with occasional *accents* and *staccatos*. Focus on these differences, and when articulations are not included be as smooth and connected as possible. The first specific issue to be aware of is the intonation of the D flats and C sharps beginning in m. 5. For most tubas, this note is an intonation issue regardless of the register. Check intonation with a tuner, especially in context. For example, in the case of the aforementioned D-flat in m. 5, it is preceded by a skip of a minor ninth, which could affect the accuracy of that D-flat. Be sure both of these pitches are centered, smooth, and displaying similar tone quality. Beyond a tuner, recording oneself is very helpful not only in this issue but throughout the excerpt. The soloist also “needs to pay careful attention to the intonation of the C in (mm.) 6 (the tubist said m. 6 but meant 10), 24, 27, 29, and 31 so that it matches that of the timpani and finally with the bass clarinet in (m.) 33.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 27 July 2012.



*Figure 2.* Third Symphony Opus 89 (S692) by James Barnes; Movement 1, Tuba Part, Measures 9-13. Used by permission of the copyright owner, Southern Music, P.O. Box 329, San Antonio, Texas 78292 © 1997 Southern Music Company.

Breath control can be an issue in this excerpt as well. The first place this is an issue is at the beginning of m. 11. Of the previously mentioned recordings, the tubist in the Japan Ground Self Defense Concert Band chose to play this phrase as it is written while the United States Air Force tubist broke the phrase marking in m. 11 and took a breath one beat earlier, between the C and the B-flat. The first option does not allow much breathing time but connects the phrases better. The second option allows for a larger breath and is consistent with phrasing that uses a pick-up note that can be found elsewhere in the excerpt, even though it is not what is written on the page. This issue was not covered by the premier band tuba player; however, in the author's preparation and in listening to other tubists prepare the excerpt it is clear that the second option is more common. In either case, choose a place to breathe and make the line as musical as possible.

Another breathing issue is in m. 16 through 18.



*Figure 3.* Third Symphony Opus 89 (S692) by James Barnes; Movement 1, Tuba Part, Measures 15-19. Used by permission of the copyright owner, Southern Music, P.O. Box 329, San Antonio, Texas 78292 © 1997 Southern Music Company.



A breath will most likely be taken by the performer before the pick-up to m. 16 and there is not an opportunity to take a breath until m. 18. Again listening to the recordings, the tubist in the Japan Ground Self Defense Concert Band breathes on the down beat of m. 18 and the Air Force Band tubist waits to breathe until the end of m. 18. Just as with the earlier breathing issue, the second option tends to be more common. If the tubist chooses this option, however, breath control and tone quality can suffer. Take a good breath and have a plan that includes the *crescendo* that goes throughout these measures.

There is a rhythmic issue to be aware of as well. As one premier band tubist stated, “be aware of the rhythmic difference between (mm.) 18/19 as it compares to (m.) 20. It’s too easy to play the rhythms all the same way.”<sup>199</sup>

Finally, once the technical difficulties are learned, the focus can turn to interpretation. This work “was conceived during a particularly emotional time in James Barnes’ life, after the loss of his baby daughter, Natalie.”<sup>200</sup> Each movement conveys a certain emotion related to this loss. The first movement in particular goes through various levels of grief. Parts of the movement are lamenting, dark, brooding, and even angry. Experiment with *vibrato*, *rubato*, and various other soloistic ideas to help convey these emotions.

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

Figure 4. Third Symphony Opus 89 (S692) by James Barnes; Movement 4, Tuba Part, Measures 338-378. Used by permission of the copyright owner, Southern Music, P.O. Box 329, San Antonio, Texas 78292 © 1997 Southern Music Company.

One other excerpt is included here because of its difficulty and because of its occurrence on a recent audition, even though it was not specifically mentioned by the premier band tuba player. The movement is primarily in 6/8 and the tempo is dotted quarter note = 120. When the tuba enters in m. 338 there is no dynamic marking, but since the most recent tuba entrance was only two measures earlier at *forte*, that is the recommended dynamic to begin the excerpt. It is challenging primarily for rhythmic and finger/articulation coordination reasons. Measure such as m. 341 have a 3/4 feel that contrasts with the light 6/8 feel that the rest of the excerpt has. These transitions into and

out of compound duple and simple triple meters may cause this passage to drag. Practice with a metronome with the eighth note sub-division turned on to keep the excerpt moving. Measures like m. 341 are also difficult because of the articulations. This is especially true of the accent on the third eighth note. Avoid playing these accents too heavy. Throughout the excerpt lightness of tone and articulation should be the primary focus.

*Russlan and Ludmilla-Mikhail Glinka, arranged by Frank Winterbottom*



Figure 5. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 1-19 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

The second excerpt covered in this chapter is *Russlan and Lumilla* by Mikhail Glinka and arranged by Frank Winterbottom. There are a several difficult passages throughout the tubist's part, but the opening 18 measures are the most often requested in military auditions.<sup>201</sup> The tubist must be aware of their fast tonguing technique, their

<sup>201</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 December 2011.

quality of tone in the low register, stable tempo, note lengths, figure technique, breath control, and the slurs/phrasing in the four measures leading into m. 19. The entire piece is marked *Presto* and the style of the tuba part remains similar throughout the work. Therefore, many of the issues found in this first excerpt will lead to better performances of the later excerpts of the piece.

As with any transcription, it is important to determine the source of the tuba part, especially if the original score did not include a tuba. For the Winterbottom arrangement, the entire band has the opening unison statement that was only played by strings in the orchestral version. Because of that, it is logical to assume that the tuba part is based on the string bass part of the original score. The technique of adding the bass parts to the original tuba part or creating a brand new tuba part for the score that had no original tuba part is a favorite technique for arrangers. Another common technique in these arrangements is to use *divisi* in the tuba parts. One reason for this is that it allows the tuba and string bass players to read the same part. However, the primary reason for the octaves in this tuba part is the age of the arrangement. Many older arrangements like this were intended for bands that had both bass and contrabass tubas. Therefore, the top parts in these works are often intended for a smaller tuba than what most tubists bring to a modern audition (usually E-flat).

So what octave should the tubist play? In some cases, the octave will be specified by the committee. In other cases, it will not. When it is not specified, make sure to learn both octaves with the caveat that the bottom octave is usually the most often requested. The only exception to the lower octave being preferable is when the top part is different

and/ or more difficult than the bottom part, as will be seen later in this chapter when discussing the band transcription of Weber's *Oberon Overture*.

Beyond the general low tessitura of the bottom octave, the first thing that a tubist will notice is the tempo. The tuba part is marked *Presto* without a specific metronomic marking on the band part. Most orchestral scores are marked half note = 135 beats per minute. When listening to recordings, the tempos for the original orchestral versions vary greatly. There is only one recording of the Winterbottom arrangement and that recording stays around whole note = 70 (half note = 140).<sup>202</sup> Most performances will however often chose much faster tempos; between whole note = 80 (or half note =160) and whole note = 100 (half note =200). The most common tempo tends to be around half note =176-192.<sup>203</sup> At that tempo, the issues mentioned earlier become particularly problematic.

The first step to learning this excerpt is to find a practice tempo that is comfortable for the tubist and allows them to play the excerpt while also making a musical line. It is also recommended that if the tubist plans to double tongue the excerpt when it is at the desired final tempo, he/she should begin practicing the double tongue at the slower tempo. This eliminates the transition from single to double tongue as the tubist increases the tempo. While at the slower tempo, tubists should use a metronome and occasionally record themselves to ensure that the line is consistent, clear, and accurate both in rhythm and note length. Once comfort with the passage at a slower tempo is reached, gradually increase the tempo until reaching a desired performance tempo. As the

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<sup>202</sup> Mikhail Glinka, arr. Frank Winterbottom, *Russlan and Ludmilla*; United States Marine Band "President's Own" conducted by William Santelmann, self-produced, CD, 1998, Recorded in 1952.

<sup>203</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

tempo increases, continue to use a metronome and occasionally record oneself to help prevent a number of bad habits that can arise.

Once the tuba player has the technique required to perform a transcription that is this "busy,"<sup>204</sup> he/she will discover that the greatest challenge is breathing and phrasing. It is essential that the tubist find a way to stay relaxed and breathe comfortably. Not doing this can lead to tension in the body which will hurt other aspects of playing, including a light tongue.<sup>205</sup> Tempo stability and note lengths can also suffer if the tubist is not careful. Most often, breaths are taken after the half notes, but these notes cannot be too short.

Clarity is also an issue. This is in part because the fingers may not be coordinated with the tongue and the pattern may be rushed, but it also could be because the tubist is trying too hard to play the *staccatos* short. This is what one of this author's past teachers called the *machine gun effect* because the note is so short that it loses all tone and lacks a good sound. A practice technique that can be helpful with this idea is to periodically finger through the passage without producing a tone in the tuba. While doing this listen to the valves and focus on the cleanliness of the valves. Once the tubist is satisfied with the valve technique in this exercise, repeat the exercise. This time, however, add the pitches but do not tongue the passage. If the passage is still clean, add the tongue. Do not try to play short. The speed of the passage at tempo will naturally aid in it sounding light and separated. Any extra effort to shorten the notes may lead to stopping the air and clarity problems. Remember, *staccato* means separated not short.

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

Also, be careful of the slurred passage in mm. 15-18.



*Figure 6.* Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 15-19 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

Because it is near the end of the excerpt, breathing becomes an issue in this section. A breath somewhere in the first two measures will be necessary for many tubists. It is important that this breath does not slow the tempo or ruin the line's style and direction. The chromatic line in the final three beats can also cause problems for many tubists. The exercises mentioned earlier in this excerpt will go a long way to improve this line.

According to one of the tubists interviewed, "if you aren't up to nailing every note perfectly (some will do this by the way), at least be **MOST** sensitive to style, balance, and flow of the music."<sup>206</sup>

There are other excerpts in the tuba part that are unlikely to appear on an audition, but were mentioned in correspondence and are worth examining here for possible auditions.

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid.



Figure 7. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 69-80 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

Avoid compressing the four eighth notes in measures 72 and 75. It is common for a tuba player who is not careful to forget to subdivide properly causing the eighth notes in this passage to be late, to rush, or to be inconsistent.<sup>207</sup>



Figure 8. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 169-172 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

Though the line beginning in m. 169 looks simple, it can drag. This is especially true of the final notes because of the *decrescendo* or the possibility of slow valves. Occasionally playing these measures with a metronome and being conscious of the issue will correct the problem.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.





Figure 9. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 285-321 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

The beginning of figure 8 is the same as figure 6 and the same issue applies here. Four measures before rehearsal #16, there is a tutti figure with many of the other sections of the band. Be prepared to play this figure in a strong and controlled manner.<sup>208</sup> The accents, staccatos, and crescendo must be controlled and clear.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.



Figure 10. Russlan and Ludmilla Overture by Mikhail Glinka, Arranged by Frank Winterbottom; Tuba Part, Measures 349-402 © Copyright 1929 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

At rehearsal #18, do not slow the half notes and do not rush or compress the eighth notes. This is another instance where the use of a metronome and recorder will be useful. Be careful of the dynamics and plan to grow with the intensity all the way into the *Piu mosso* after rehearsal #19 (m. 373). Most conductors get much faster at this point and will go into a *l* feel that emphasizes the whole note rather than the half note. Be careful as the speed and volume can cause accuracy problems.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

*Lincolnshire Posy*-Percy Grainger

(2nd speed) Faster

46

A

B

46

*mf*

*fff*

*f*

*p molto cresc.*

51

unis.

63

*p cresc.*

68

*ritard.*

*a tempo*

(2nd speed)

76

83

*ritard.*

*dim.*

*a tempo*

*f*

*pp*

*f*

*p*

*mf*

*p*

*ppp*

Figure 11. *Lincolnshire Posy* by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 3 “Rufford Park Poachers,” Tuba Part, Measures 46-84 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.<sup>210</sup>

There are a number of excerpts worth studying in Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy*.

However, the excerpt in Movement 3, “Rufford Park Poachers” is the primary excerpt

<sup>210</sup> The tempo is not found at the beginning of this movement. It will be dealt later in this excerpt.

that one will find on a premier military band audition. The main portion of the excerpt is from m. 46 until m. 63. It is also common for the excerpt to be extended to m. 84. In this excerpt, the tubist has a number of challenges, including strength of low range, tone control, long-term phrasing, breath control, dynamics, and rhythmic accuracy. Another thing to notice is the *divisi* throughout the excerpt. Just as with the previous work, if not instructed, learn both octaves but understand that the bottom octave is more difficult and should get most of the attention. There are also two versions of the first half of this movement as can be seen at the beginning of the earlier excerpt. Version A is played more often. However, either version could be requested. In fact, since the main difficulties of the excerpt do not begin until m. 51, the version chosen will not play heavily in the committee's opinions.

The first thing to consider is the tempo. The movement is marked "Flowing" and at the beginning of the excerpt it is marked "Faster" which does not help when deciding on a tempo. The conductor's score is more helpful where the beginning of the excerpt is marked "Somewhat faster, quarter note = 80."<sup>211</sup> Because of the rhythmic complexity, it is recommended that the tubist think of the eighth note rather than the quarter note throughout the excerpt. There are many recordings to listen to, however, and it should be easy to find a satisfactory tempo. Most recordings tend to stay between eighth note = 144 and eighth note = 152. Mentally making the eighth note the primary beat is especially useful in the mixed meter and complex rhythm sections. Practice with a metronome and be aware that because of the low range and poor breathing options, tempo and rhythmic

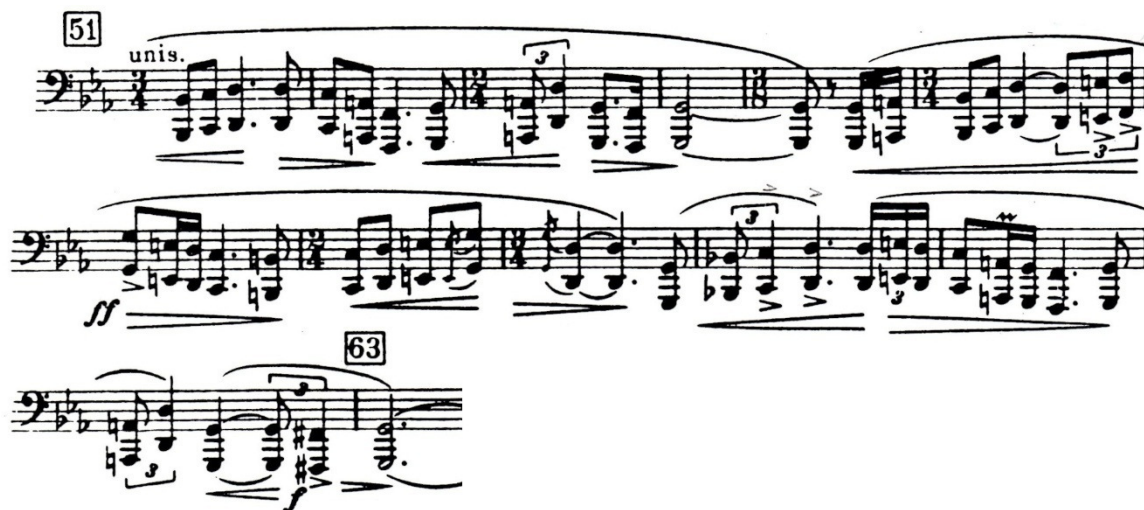
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<sup>211</sup> Grainger, Percy. *Lincolnshire Posy*. Ludwig Music Co., Cleveland, OH. 1987.

accuracy may suffer. Specifically, make sure that entrances after breaths are not late.

Recording oneself with and without a metronome will reveal a lot of these issues.

The second issue is related to breathing and focuses on the length of the excerpt and low tessitura of the part. “It’s a long haul, so pacing is important”<sup>212</sup> Planning every breath, *crescendo*, and phrase ahead of time is vital. It will on occasion be necessary to breathe in the middle of slurs, which in this case serve as much as phrase markings as they do true slurs. Remember that this will be performed by a section of tubas, so breath placement in performance will be different to allow staggered breathing to accurately convey Grainger’s phrasing. However, in an audition, planning your breaths to make the best musical line is necessary and requires special planning. For example, the first phrase slur of the excerpt begins in the pickup to m. 51 and goes to m. 55.



*Example 12.* Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 3 “Rufford Park Poachers,” Tuba Part, Measures 51-63 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, email correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 30 September, 2011.

<sup>213</sup> The tempo is not found at the beginning of this movement. It will be dealt later in this excerpt.



The length, range, and dynamics make it difficult to complete the phrase in one breath. In a section of two or more tubas, alternating breathing every other measure is a common technique, but doing this in an audition would be a bad decision as it would hurt the musical line. So where is a good breathing point? In general, breaths after longer notes that are also coupled with *decrescendos* are the best options as they allow a larger breath that is less noticeable to the committee listening. Take a large breath before the pickup to m. 51 and at the pickup to m. 53. The best breath locations after this are beats one and two of m. 55, before the pickup to m. 58, pickup to m. 60, before the pickup to m. 61, and before beat 2 of m. 62. Focus on breathing and using air well throughout the excerpt without neglecting the musical line. In all cases, the phrase must be the priority with the breath choices being subordinate.

There are a number of *crescendos* that are immediately followed by *decrescendos* that do not indicate how far the *crescendo* should go. Do not overdo these *crescendos* and stay truthful to the overall plan that you decided on for the excerpt. Do not overlook the articulation markings either. There are a number of well placed accents that have a dramatic effect on the excerpt.

There are also a few ornaments to the musical line to work out. First are the two grace notes in mm. 58-59. Add a soft articulation to the grace note, slur into the note it is gracing, and focus on its clarity. In an attempt to make the grace notes sound like grace notes, musicians often put them as close to the beat as possible. If the tubist is not careful, the result will be grace notes that are not accurate and they will simply sound chipped. To avoid this, try to put a little more space between the grace note and the main note. This is easier if the tubist is hearing the eighth note as the beat, as was suggested earlier.

There is also a brief mordent in m. 61 that cannot be overlooked. Though it is not low, the range combined with the surrounding rhythms make the clarity of this ornament particularly difficult. The ornament goes from the written A natural up to a B flat and lies well on the tuba. Make sure it is rhythmically accurate and sounds different than the sixteenth note triplet that is one beat earlier.

Lastly, having a strong consistent tone especially in the lower register is perhaps the most important aspect of this excerpt. Find ways to work on a good low range and consistent tone outside of the excerpt. Long term work on these aspects of playing is the only way to improve them. Certain etude books like Phil Snedecor's *Low Etudes for Tuba*,<sup>214</sup> orchestral excerpts like Sergei Prokofiev's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony,<sup>215</sup> band excerpts like Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Toccata Marziale*,<sup>216</sup> and other works by Grainger are particularly useful. If possible, playing music down an octave can also be helpful.

Measures 62-84 of this excerpt are less frequently requested but have some of the same issues with breathing, rhythm, and phrasing that was seen in the first half of the excerpt. There are also issues with dynamic contrast, articulation, and musicality.

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<sup>214</sup> Phil Snedecor, *Low Etudes for Tuba*.

<sup>215</sup> Sergie Prokofiev. *Symphony No. 5 in B flat Major*. Hamburg, Germany: Edition Sikorski, 1944.

<sup>216</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams. *Toccata Marziale*.

The musical score is for the Tuba part of 'Rufford Park Poachers' by Percy Aldridge Grainger. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff (measures 63-67) features a syncopated line with a crescendo starting in measure 65. The second staff (measures 68-75) includes a ritardando in measure 67, followed by a return to tempo in measure 68. The third staff (measures 76-82) continues the syncopated line with various dynamics. The fourth staff (measures 83-84) concludes with a final ritardando and a return to tempo. The score is marked with various dynamics including *ff*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, *dim.*, and *ppp*.

Example 13. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 3 “Rufford Park Poachers,” Tuba Part, Measures 62-84 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.<sup>217</sup>

Measures 63-68 has a syncopated line that is played in the entire band except the melodic instruments. It is accompanied by a *crescendo*, *tenutos* and accents, and a *ritardando* in m. 67. The conductor will usually be very helpful in indicating all of these issues. In an audition, use your best judgment based on research and experimentation. How much should the *ritardando* slow down? As it slows down, should the notes stay connected or should the space in between the notes increase? When and where should the *crescendo* start? How much space should the eighth note get before m. 68? Breathing is not really an issue, but all of these other issues are related to musicality and experimentation and listening to quality recordings is the best way to find the answers.

<sup>217</sup> The tempo is not found at the beginning of this movement. It will be dealt later in this excerpt.



From mm. 68-83, the difficulties are primarily tone control in an even lower register than what was required in the first half, breathing choices, dynamic contrast, musicality, and rhythmic accuracy especially in mm. 81-82.

Keep the air relaxed and strive to have as great a contrast with the dynamics as possible. The dynamic contrast is more pronounced in this section and this needs to be noticeable. Because of the range and dynamics, breathing can also be an issue. If a breath is necessary in a slur, chose wisely and make it as musical as possible. Be careful of the triplet and dotted eighth/sixteenth note rhythms. Finally, be careful of mm. 81-82. It is rhythmically challenging especially because of the *ritardando* that is included. This is another place where thinking of the eighth note as the beat would be more useful than the quarter note beat.



Figure 14. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 5 “Lord Melbourne,” Tuba Part, Measures 49-59 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.<sup>218</sup>

Most of the other movements of *Lincolnshire Posy* also contain excerpts worth looking at though most are unlikely to appear on an audition. Of them, Movement 5, “Lord Melbourne,” is the only movement that has an excerpt that has occurred on a recent audition. That excerpt is the last 11 measures of the movement. It deals with many

<sup>218</sup> The tempo is not found at the beginning of this movement. It will be dealt later in this excerpt.

of the same issues that are found in “Rufford Park Poachers,” but the unmetered measures and number of fermatas put more emphasis on the tubist emoting a strong musical idea. The tuba part has no tempo marking to open the movement, which is simply marked “Heavy”. The score however is marked differently. There the conductor is told to perform “Heavy, fierce, quarter note = 96-120.”<sup>219</sup> This tempo flexibility and the fact that rehearsal C and rehearsal D are unmetered create a lot of options for the tubist in a premier band audition. The instructions in the score once again offer more useful information than the tuba part on how to perform these unmetered measures. Here, the unmetered measures are marked “Free time” and the conductor’s instructions are to slightly vary the beat-lengths to emulate “the characteristic of many English folksingers.”<sup>220</sup> A tubist in an audition is therefore encouraged to be as flexible as possible with the beat when deciding on an interpretation without deviating too far from what is commonly done. Just as was stated before, there are a number of recordings to get ideas from. If it is possible to find a recording of the group being auditioned for, especially if that recording uses the band’s current conductor, then that interpretation should weigh heavily on the candidate’s choices in interpretation.

Beyond interpretation, have a strong and consistent tone throughout and observe the articulations and dynamics as in the previous excerpt. There is one misprint to observe. The fermata prior to m. 50 has a *crescendo* marked. In the score this *crescendo* is only supposed to be played in the horns. In fact, the score specifically instructs the rest of the band not to get louder.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Grainger, Percy. Lincolnshire Posy.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.



Figure 15. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 5 “Lord Melbourne,” Tuba Part, Measures 27-30 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.

One other section in this movement is the mm. 28-30. Again, the score offers more instructions than the tuba part. In it, this section is marked “Lively, playful quarter note = about 90.”<sup>222</sup> Other than the occasional articulation to be aware of, the main issue is rhythmic. “Be sure to delineate the 8th note triplet from the next measure which is in 3/8 time.”<sup>223</sup>



Figure 16. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 2 “Horkstow Grange,” Tuba Part, Measures 29-37 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.

Movement 2, “Horkstow Grange,” is marked “Slowly flowing” and is a chorale-like movement. As a result, it is not terribly challenging for the tubist. However the last nine measures are worth some attention. “Be sure to place the 8th notes in (mm.) 31, 32 and 33 properly, as well as the triplets in (mm.) 35 and 36.”<sup>224</sup> Conductors will often

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, email correspondence.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

show each of these notes' placements in performance, but if it is requested for in an audition, the candidate should use their best judgment.

Figure 17. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 4 “The Brisk Young Sailor,” Tuba Part, Measures 18-41 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.

In “The Brisk Young Sailor,” there is one solo passage at m. 23. The rest of the tuba section joins at m. 33. This section can be tricky and since it does involve a solo cannot be ignored in preparation for a performance. The movement is entirely in 3/4 and is marked “Sprightly” with the score adding that the tempo should be quarter note = 92. In the solo portion, be careful of the articulations and slurs. Be as light as possible. Once the tutti section has been reached be careful of the rhythmic accuracy of mm. 35-36 and keep the 16th notes in m. 37 as clean as possible. Finger-tongue coordination can be a

problem. Lastly, conductors often request for m. 41 to be louder than the *forte* that is marked.<sup>225</sup>



Figure 18. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 6 “The Lost Lady Found,” Tuba Part, Measures 80-97 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.

The final movement, “Lost Lady Found,” is also in 3/4 and is marked “Fast, but sturdily,” dotted half note = about 66. The movement has two sections that could use prior attention in a practice room for the tubist. First, at m. 81, the tubas enter in unison with bassoon, bass clarinet, and baritone saxophone. This line is an imitation of a line that much of the rest of the band has already been playing. Be sure to “match your sound with that of the woodwinds that have already set the style for this section.”<sup>226</sup> At measures 87 and 92, pay attention to the time and articulation.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

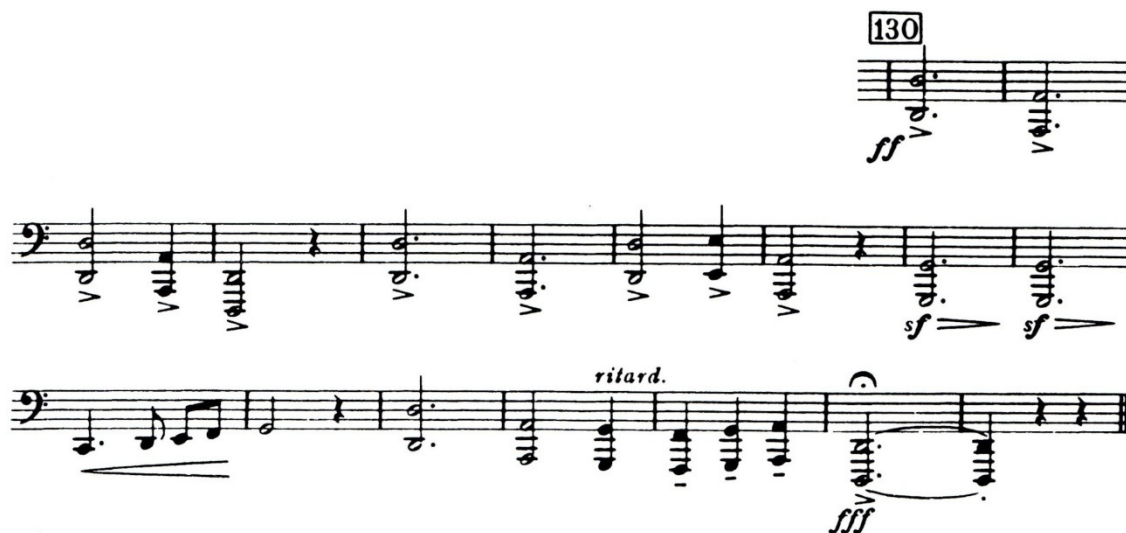


Figure 19. Lincolnshire Posy by Percy Aldridge Grainger; Movement 6 “The Lost Lady Found,” Tuba Part, Measures 130-146 © Copyright 1940 by Percy Aldridge Grainger Used by special arrangement with Ludwig Music Publications, LLC.

The second section is m. 130 to the end. The lower octave of this passage “should be broad and supportive. Make sure your low ‘D’ is in tune and doesn't bark.”<sup>227</sup>

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



*J'ai été au bal-Donald Grantham*

$\text{♩} = 96$  *Very lively & spirited  
in a light swing rhythm*

Solo (116)

*p mp p mp p*

*cresc. mf dim. mp cresc.*

*f dim. mf cresc. ff dim.*

(128)

*f mf mp mf mp mf mp cresc. f*

*mf f cresc. ff*

(140)

*p sub.*

Figure 20. *J'ai été au bal* by Donald Grantham; Tuba Part, Measures 115-140  
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"J' ai été au bal" by Donald Grantham is requested on auditions because, like the James Barnes *Third Symphony*, there is a prominent tuba solo which begins in mm. 116-140 and has a number of technical and musical challenges. Most importantly, it needs to be performed with a swing style. Other issues include tempo, rhythmic complexities, articulations, dynamics, phrasing, and interval accuracy.

The solo is the same 12 measures of material repeated with different accompaniment the second time.<sup>228</sup> Listening to recordings prior to preparing the solo can be help to hear the piece's "groove."<sup>229</sup> Proper attention to the slurs and accents are necessary to produce the needed style. Work to get a smooth *legato* swing. Do not overlook the other articulations in this solo either. Each articulation must be accurate but in general, have a light feel. These articulations begin at the beginning of the solo with *marcato* accents on beat 2 of measures 116 and 117. Nearly every measure in the solo also contains an accented pickup eighth note that is slurred into a strong beat. Emphasize these pickup notes as well.



Figure 21. J'ai été au bal by Donald Grantham; Tuba Part, Measures 120-122  
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Pay particular attention to the *staccato* notes and drive through mm. 122-124 and 134-136.<sup>230</sup>



Figure 22. J'ai été au bal by Donald Grantham; Tuba Part, Measures 122-125  
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<sup>228</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, email correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 28 October, 2012.

<sup>229</sup> The author knows of seven commercially available recordings, two by the University of North Texas Wind Ensemble, one by the United States Air Force Heartland of America Band, one by the University of Florida Wind Symphony, one by the Eastern Michigan University Wind Symphony, one by the University of Georgia Wind Ensemble, and one by the United States Coast Guard.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.



There are a number of places to breathe in the solo, but it is important to take breaths that do not interrupt the phrases or drag the tempo. For example, take a breath before the last eighth note of m. 119 and *crescendo* through 122. On the other hand, taking a breath in one of the other eighth note rests in mm. 120-121 could interrupt the direction of the line if the tubist is not careful.

From a tempo standpoint, the solo moves quickly and rushing can be an issue. It is marked half note = 96, and m. 125 in particular can be difficult to perform at the marked tempo. So, just as in *Russlan and Ludmilla*, use a metronome and find a slower comfortable tempo to begin learning the solo. Focus on hearing the correct intervals, playing the correct rhythms, and using the correct style before increasing the tempo. Only when these aspects have been mastered should the tubist begin increasing the tempo. Be careful of sections like mm. 122-123. The rests coupled with the syncopation have a tendency to cause these measures to rush. A metronome and recorder can keep the tempo on track.

“Dynamics are clearly indicated, but the player should tailor the extremes to be sure they come through the accompaniment.”<sup>231</sup> The first half of the solo is primarily accompanied by a suspended cymbal and other non-pitched percussion. The second twelve measures add other instruments, especially the brass. Because of this added accompaniment, the solo increases one dynamic level. The tubist should clearly distinguish between these two levels in an audition. At that point, it is hoped that all of the technical aspects of the solo have been mastered and the soloist can focus on the

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

previously mentioned style, which because of its uniqueness should be a priority in a performance.

*Symphony in B Flat for Band-Paul Hindemith*

108 (H)

*f* *mf cresc.*

112 2 One Solo *mf*

119 (I) tutti *f*

124

128 One or two Solo *p*

132

137 (J) tutti *cresc.*

141

145 *ff*

150



Figure 23. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 108-155 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

The next work is Paul Hindemith's *Symphony in B flat for Band*. Several excerpts are noteworthy in the tuba part. In the first movement, mm. 108-155 and mm. 201-212 are both requested on auditions. In the third movement, mm. 159-225 could also appear on an audition. There are also three other excerpts that, even though they are less likely to appear on an audition, are still noteworthy. These excerpts are mm. 23-26 and 78-90 in Movement II and also mm. 30-79 in Movement III.

Though each excerpt is unique, many of the same issues that have been discussed previously can be applied here as well. These issues are low range clarity, articulation-valve coordination, breath control, *legato* style, and phrasing.

Another concept that has not been discussed yet but is found here is the performance of twentieth century music that does not stay fully tonal in a traditional sense. This style of composition is often very clear with expression markings. Because of this the tubist should be as literal as possible with any dynamic and articulation markings.<sup>232</sup>

<sup>232</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

The first important excerpt to know is letter H (m. 109) to letter K (m. 155) in the first movement. Though the movement has multiple sections, the tempo stays at the half note = 88-92 throughout.



*Figure 24.* Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 108-110 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

At the beginning of the excerpt there is a dotted eighth/sixteenth note pattern that is characteristic of Hindemith's compositional style and must be played accurately and crisply.<sup>233</sup> Make sure the pattern is properly subdivided or it could easily sound like triplets. The easiest way to ensure this happens is to play the passage with a metronome and the eighth or sixteenth note subdivision turned on.

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid.



Figure 25. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 139-148 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

At letter J, “the first really challenging material appears,” according to one tubist interviewed.<sup>234</sup> Observe the *piano* dynamic at the beginning of the passage. It is a common mistake to play too loudly or *crescendo* too quickly, too soon, or too much, and this compounds the problem of a lack of rests. In a performance there are usually multiple tubas in the section, allowing the performer to leave out a note here or there (stagger breathing). The result is a fluid line with no gaps and the audience is none the wiser. In an audition however, the performer is alone and as such, if possible, the goal should be to play all the notes. Because the *tenuto* markings in m. 147 require all the quarter notes in this measure to be as connected as possible, a breath in this measure is also not possible. Therefore, in order to play the passage in one breath, the performer would need to play ten full measures with one breath. In addition, because there is also a *crescendo* from *piano* to *fortissimo* in this same passage, it may not be possible for the musician to make it to m. 148 on one breath. If the player is unable to do so, leaving out one or two notes

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

between J and m. 148 is acceptable. Though there are a number of options, this document's author omits the last eighth note in m. 144 and the fourth eighth note in m. 146. There are other options such as final eighth note in m. 142. Whatever the performer chooses, the priority must be musicality and accuracy to dynamics and articulation.

Care should also be given to note lengths and counting at measures 149 and 152.



Figure 26. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 145-153 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

The final portion of this excerpt is important to practice for pacing and phrasing reasons. It is easy to get carried away with the dynamics once the part reaches *fortissimo*. The performer must sustain the dynamic to the end of the excerpt without compromising intonation, tone quality, and pitch accuracy. It is common for conductors to put a *ritardando* into the music as it approaches letter K, although it is not written. In an audition, the tubist should avoid doing this.

Figure 27. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 201-212 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

Like the first excerpt of this piece, the entrance at m. 203 is another breathing challenge. Breathe after the quarter notes on the end of phrases and be careful that the tempo does not drag. In addition, taking a breath during the slur before the pickup to m. 208 might also be necessary because of the volume, range, and length of the phrase.

This excerpt also requires a smooth *legato* in the first half and similar accents to the first excerpt in the second half. Make sure the melody is as smooth as possible but do not let the tempo drag. Keep the line driving into m. 209. Finally, just as was done in the previous sections of *divisi*, the bottom octave is most often requested in an audition.



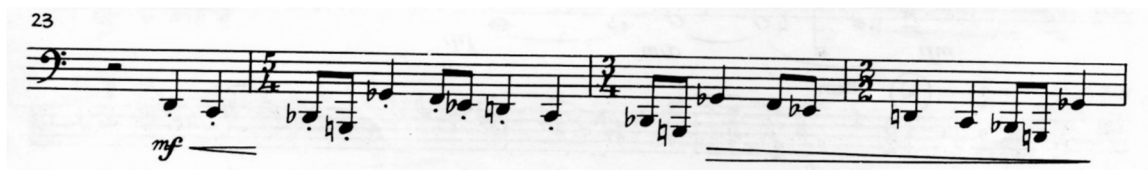


Figure 28. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement II, Tuba Part, Measures 23-26 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

“The second movement must start very steadily.”<sup>235</sup> Most of the tuba part in this movement is manageable; however there are two excerpts that are useful to study. The first starts at m. 23. Though there are a number of meter changes, the dominant meter is 2/2 (m. 23 is 2/2) and the tempo is half note = 56. The tuba part has *staccatos* and serves as a counter-melody that contrasts the *legatos* lines that are in the rest of the brass. Because it is so contrasting, it does not need to *crescendo* past a *forte* before going back down to *piano*.<sup>236</sup> It will still be heard.

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

Figure 29. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement II, Tuba Part, Measures 78-90 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

The other excerpt begins in m. 80 and goes to m. 87. At this point in the movement, the meter has changes to a compound meter and the tempo has increased to dotted quarter = 112. At m. 80 the meter is 12/8 and “keeping the tempo steady and getting off of the ties is important.”<sup>237</sup> Rhythms are also of interest partly because compound meters are not as familiar as simple meters to many musicians and also because of the syncopation. A little practice and a metronome should keep this section accurate.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

30

34

39 (C) 2 1 One Solo p

46

52 (D) tutti mf

57

62

66 (E) scherzando 8 Sax. Alto 1st (F) espressivo One Solo p

Figure 30. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement III, Tuba Part, Measures 30-79 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.<sup>238</sup>

The material at m. 30 is the first of two main themes in the movement and the tempo is half note = 100 with the primary meter being 2/2 (the included excerpt also begins in 2/2). Even though the excerpt is the melody and the dynamic at the beginning is

<sup>238</sup> This excerpt is in 2/2 and the tempo is half note = 100 BPM.

*forte*, it does not need to be too loud. Be conscious of the tempo and make a good *crescendo* into letter E (m. 66).

The pickup to m. 35 through C is rhythmically challenging and cannot be overlooked. The 3/4 measure in m. 40 is the primary difficulty. Being able to hear the sub-divided quarter notes are important. In particular, if the tubist transitions into thinking of the quarter note as the primary beat two measures before m. 40, he/she will make the 3/4 measure much more manageable.

159 (L) Tempo primo  
Hrn.  
f

165 4 3 3 3

174

178 (M) Poco più largamente  
f

183 3 3 3

188 cresc.

192 (N) 3 ff

201 0 6

213 ff

219

Figure 31. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement III, Tuba Part, Measures 159-225 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

The final excerpt that could appear on an audition begins at m. 169. The tempo has not changed and the meter remains primarily in 2/2. The material here is the second theme of the movement and has already appeared once in the tuba part, in mm. 128-136. Issues in this excerpt include tempo consistency, tonal accuracy, low range, articulation, and phrasing.

First, keep the time moving and drive through the opening melody.<sup>239</sup>

Rhythmically, there are quarter note triplets and regular quarter notes intermingled throughout the melody and these must be accurate. Getting the low F flat and E flat in m. 177 to speak can also be challenging especially because of the stuffiness of the tuba in this register. Trying to play too loud or do too much with air can result in the notes not speaking. This is where the low range work that was mentioned in previous excerpts will pay off. In particular play etudes, excerpts, and daily routines that focus on getting articulated lower notes to speak immediately.

“At M, observe the slightly slower tempo. If given the opportunity, delineate the two speeds clearly for the listener (in this case the panel).”<sup>240</sup> The trill in m. 182 lies well, but practice may be needed to ensure cleanliness.

“The stretch from 196 to the end is a great moment in band literature, be careful to not get carried away.”<sup>241</sup> The descending half note line is part of a huge chorale-like passage and is played by the entire band minus the flutes, oboes, and clarinets (who are imitating each other in an eighth note-quarter note passage). This chorale is harmonically complex and leads to the band arriving on a chord in m. 206 that uses every note of the

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

B-flat Dorian scale. “Controlled sound is important here, especially in an audition situation.”<sup>242</sup>



Figure 32. Symphony in B flat by Paul Hindemith; Movement III, Tuba Part, Measures 197-225 © 1951 by Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany ©Renewed All Rights Reserved Used by permission of the European American Music Distributors Company. Sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany.

Just as was true in m. 177, do not try to play too loudly or *crescendo* too much.

This is particularly difficult because of the register of the lower *divisi*. The bottom octave is most commonly requested in an audition and as it descends, the line has a tendency to drag especially as it approaches a register that uses most or all of the valves. This increased number of valves also increases the amount of air resistance in the sound. Tubists refer to this as stuffiness and it makes the note's initial response difficult. Practice with a metronome, record run-throughs, and do not try to do too much. At m. 214, the low Ds in mm. 214-216 are again problematic and need special attention. This is the lowest and stuffiest note that will be covered in this chapter, and it is particularly

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

problematic because of the skip of a major seventh leading into it and the minor seventh coming out of it. Furthermore, the tempo, and the articulations required make these notes difficult. The *tenuto* markings do aid the tubist. In an audition, if these notes do not speak, keep going and do not let it affect other parts of the performance. Tempo, phrasing, and the quality of sound for everything else still must be consistent. Rather than trying to separate each note, connect them with a soft articulation and the response should improve. Finally, observe the differences in rhythm between measures 221-222 and 223-225. The dotted quarters need to be longer than the *staccato* quarter notes.

If requested to play these excerpts as part of an audition in a tuba or low brass section, focus on blend. Note lengths, similar complimentary tone, and matching style are a priority in these situations and in any performance.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid.



*Suite No. 1 in E flat, Op. 28-Gustav Holst*

**Allegro moderato**

**A** *pp* *cresc.*

**B** *f* *cresc.* **Brillante**

**C** *pesante* *dim.* *p* **22**

**D** *p pesante*

**E**

Figure 33. Suite No. 1 in E flat, Op. 28 by Gustav Holst, Arranged by Colin Matthews; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 1-97 © Copyright by Boosey & Co. Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

Written in 1909 and premiered in 1920, Gustav Holst's *First Suite in E flat* is one of the first pieces written for the modern band and inspired many other twentieth century British composers, including Gordon Jacob and Ralph Vaughan Williams, to write for

wind band. Many of Holst's works provide interesting parts for the tuba, especially his music for band. For military auditions, the "Fantasia on the Dargason" from the *Second Suite for Military Band in F Major*<sup>244</sup> and the "Chaconne" from the *First Suite in E flat for Military Band*<sup>245</sup> are the most commonly requested parts. For this document, the attention will focus on the "Chaconne."<sup>246</sup>

The primary audition material from this movement is the first eight measures. This is the first statement of the chaconne melody that acts as the foundation for the entire movement and is stated by the tuba, euphonium, and string bass. The overall difficulty in this melody lies with having an excellent sound with solid intonation while playing at a soft dynamic, a smooth *legato*, and executing the wider intervals. Though the range lies in the middle part of the tuba, it skips down to a low G which can affect air control and sound quality.

The movement is marked *Allegro moderato* but there is no specified metronome tempo. Conductors have varying interpretations on the tempo for this movement, which can dramatically affect the requirements on the tuba player. The biggest effect of the tempo choice is whether or not to breathe before the G in m. 4. Conductors often want this opening statement performed in one breath. Because of this, he/she will take the wind musician's lung capacity into consideration and pick a faster tempo. Other times, the conductor may chose a slower tempo and indicate a breath at m. 4. "It is important that if

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<sup>244</sup> Holst, Gustav. *Second Suite for Military Band in F Major* (New York: Boosey and Co, 1922).

<sup>245</sup> Holst, Gustav. *First Suite in E flat for Military Band* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes Co, 1921).

<sup>246</sup> This information comes primarily from score study of Holst's three band works, the First and Second Military Suites as well as the Hammersmith. Additionally, the titles for these works are listed in multiple ways depending on the version. Though the official title is *Suite No. 1 in E flat*, First Suite in E flat for Military Band is often the commonly used title. It is one of these versions that the author is using for this paper which is why the copyright is different than the citations and the references within the main document.

this is the case, the re-entry sound must be smooth, in character, and in the flow of the music, so as not to interrupt the phrase.”<sup>247</sup> If the candidate does not know what that band’s conductor prefers, he/she should do what feels comfortable though performing the excerpt in one breath is usually preferable in an audition so that the committee is aware that the candidate can perform it this way if a future conductor wishes. If the tubist can maintain a strong sound and good breath through the entire phrase, the result will be a “lovely, long phrase...with a relaxed finish to the E flat.”<sup>248</sup>

Whether a breath is taken in m. four or not, focus on having a smooth and controlled tone. The hardest intervals tend to be the F-B flat in mm. 3-4 and the B flat-E flat in m. 8. These two intervals would not be difficult if they were not so exposed at pianissimo. Focus on supporting the sound and chose a dynamic that helps the control. Inconsistency in response is often a support issue and the softer dynamic will not help. So choose the dynamic wisely.

The *pesante* after letter B (m. 49) is another part worthy of study.

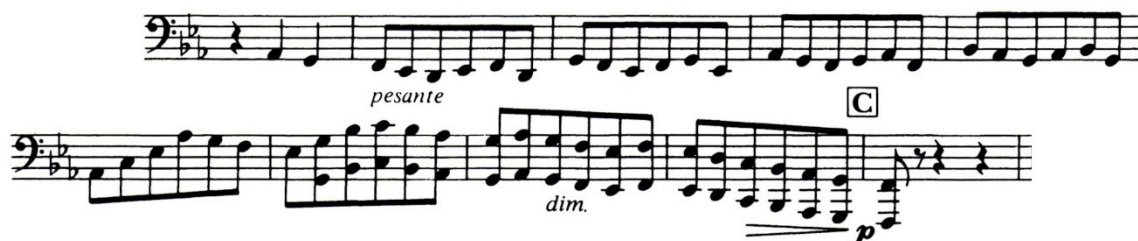


Figure 34. Suite No. 1 in E flat, Op. 28 by Gustav Holst, Arranged by Colin Matthews; Movement I, Tuba Part, Measures 48-57 © Copyright by Boosey & Co. Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

<sup>247</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 December 2011.

<sup>248</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

The second excerpt (mm. 48-57) is less likely to be requested on an audition, but is worth some time in a practice room. The tempo is not much different than the first eight measures and if planned well, can also be performed in one controlled breath. Once again, the speed and dynamics of the passage will dictate whether or not this is possible. Otherwise, taking a small breath in between one or two of the eighth notes or if playing in a section using staggered breaths where necessary are suggested. “Keep in mind this passage starts at *fortissimo* and winds down to *piano* and avoid slowing down and losing clarity in negotiating the *decrescendo*.”<sup>249</sup>

Be sure to take the overall conception of the movement into account when preparing and performing the work. For example, the overall effect of the movement is a gradual *crescendo* that climaxes at the very end, and not being true to the dynamics can result in the movement not accomplishing this affect. Most of the part is doubled in the rest of the low brass and low woodwinds, so intonation of the unison and octave parts is also a concern. In general, “go for proper style, balance, and solid pitch control.”<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

*Barnum and Bailey's Favorite-Karl King*



Figure 35. Barnum and Bailey's Favorite by Karl King; Tuba Part, Measures 25-97 © Copyright by C.L. Barnhouse Used by Permission.

The first of two marches that will be covered in this chapter is Karl King's *Barnum and Bailey's Favorite*. A significant portion of the march could appear on an audition including the second strain that begins on m. 25 and the entire trio and *Grandioso* sections.<sup>251</sup> All of these excerpts deal with similar issues and can be attacked in the same way. The final strain that starts at m. 64 however "is more challenging simply because it starts lower. When you prepare these excerpts, you will be required (99% of the time) to play the lower octave, but be able to do both."<sup>252</sup>

As with all marches, tempo consistency and rhythmic accuracy are a priority. This tuba part, however, also requires excellent finger technique, coordination of the tongue

<sup>251</sup> In American marches, each new section of music is referred to as a strain. These strains are usually well defined with repeats and often times each strain will contrast the style of previous strains.

<sup>252</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 December 2011.

with the fingers, and control of the middle part of the tuba's register, all in a manner that sounds effortless. When playing in a section, blending is also important.

Because it is a circus march, tempo must be the first consideration. There is no tempo indicated in the part or in the score. So what is the preferred tempo? Each conductor and each band has their own interpretation. With that in mind, circus marches tend to be noticeably faster than a typical march.<sup>253</sup> For this march, some conductors use a tempo that ranges from quarter note = 172-196 and feeling the tempo in "1".<sup>254</sup> Others chose a slower tempo that ranges from quarter note = 144-160. "Any faster than the 196 can sound frantic or start feeling *compressed* to the listener. Remember that the key is to have the performance sound effortless, yet exciting, in control, but stylistically correct."<sup>255</sup> The tubist should also consider the ensemble he/she is auditioning for. If the section and conductor being auditioned for have been together for a while, knowing their tempo and stylistic choices before preparing the excerpts can also be particularly useful.<sup>256</sup>

Many of the suggestions previously made for learning music with fast tempos and difficult technical requirements are applicable here, including slowing down the tempo, fingering through the passage without buzzing a note, and playing the passage without using the tongue. Even at a slow tempo, focus on accuracy, clarity, and consistency and do not speed up until everything is working well. Fingerings are particularly difficult and this can be the root of many problems. Once the tubist begins to increase the tempo, do not forget to continue paying attention to these qualities. This is when poor practice

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<sup>253</sup> Tempos for non-circus marches will be dealt with in more depth in the next section.

<sup>254</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

techniques can come to light. If accuracy, clarity, or consistency problems return as the tempo is increased, it may be necessary to return to a slower tempo at least temporarily and renew focus on the fundamentals.

As the tempo increases, most tubists will reach a point where multiple tonguing will be necessary. If this is the case, it is recommended to use the multiple tonguing technique even in the slower tempos and continue it as the tempo is increased. The best etude book for improving this type of articulation is the *J.B. Arban Complete Method for Tuba* transcribed and edited by Jerry Young and Wesley Jacobs.<sup>257</sup>

Two specific sections to be aware of are the final four measures of the second strain (mm. 38-41) and the final strain (mm. 63-79). The eighth notes in the final four measures on the second strain can rush, be played too short, or inaccurately. Isolating these measures and using some of the previously mentioned suggestions can correct these problems. As was stated earlier, because the final strain is lower than the second strain, it is more difficult from a fingering standpoint. The fingering patterns in this section are particularly difficult and may cause clarity to suffer. Be sure the fingers are confident and accurate. In particular watch the intonation of the D-flats and G-flats (not only in this strain but throughout the trio).<sup>258</sup>

“Occasionally, [the tubist] may be asked to play the final *Grandioso* section. It's a ‘bonus’ to understand that there is generally a tempo change from the first to second time.”<sup>259</sup> As was stated in the Hindemith however, if the current ensemble’s performance practice at this section is not known, do this with caution. Finally, do not forget to

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<sup>257</sup> J.B. Arban, *J.B. Arban Complete Method for Tuba*, ed. Jerry Smith and Wesley Jacobs. Maple City, MI: Encore Music, 1996.

<sup>258</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.



observe the dynamics throughout the part. Most are not subtle and are in logical places so there is no reason to forget them.

*Stars and Stripes Forever March-John Philip Sousa*



Figure 36. Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa; Tuba Part, Measures 1-127 © Copyright 1951 by John Church Company now owned by Carl Fischer LLC. New York, New York 10012 Reprinted by Permission.

The next work that will be discussed is *Stars and Stripes Forever* by John Philip Sousa. The most important portions of this part are the opening, first strain and the dogfight.<sup>260</sup> “This is arguably the most important excerpt one will find on many band audition lists. It tells the panel many things about the player very quickly. Can the player keep steady time? Is he or she playing the rhythms correctly? Is it in an appropriate

<sup>260</sup> The dogfight will be defined later in this section.



style?”<sup>261</sup> These are general issues that can indicate larger problems in tubist’s preparation and are all major red flags to the audition committee. No tempo is in the tuba part, but the most recent score produced by Keith Brion, the conductor of the New Sousa Band is marked with the half note = 124 and most conductors tend to chose a tempo between half note = 120-132.

The first portion of the piece that is important to examine is the opening and first strain that ends in m. 21.



Figure 37. Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa; Reduced Score, Measures 1-4 © Copyright 1951 by John Church Company now owned by Carl Fischer LLC. New York, New York 10012 Reprinted by Permission.<sup>262</sup>

The opening should have clear articulations and each *marcato* must be played with accents and space. Do not overlook the slur in the first measure as it is easy to accidentally articulate that eighth note.

<sup>261</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>262</sup> John Philip Sousa, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, arr. Keith Brion and Loras Schissel. Oskaloosa, IA: C.L. Barnhouse Co. 1996, 9.



*Figure 38.* Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa; Tuba Part, Measures 1-21 © Copyright 1951 by John Church Company now owned by Carl Fischer LLC. New York, New York 10012 Reprinted by Permission.

In the opening strain, attention needs to be paid to the rolling bass line figure. The most common mistake is for players to turn the sixteenth notes into eighth notes. As one tuba player said in an interview, “the sixteenth notes are meant to roll the line downward and must be very quick.”<sup>263</sup> Clarity of these passages is also a challenge since the fingering patterns will involve a lot of second and third to fourth valve combinations.

There is a tendency to drag the tempo in this section, which is made worse by the melody’s tendency to rush. Working on this section with a metronome is therefore important. Turn the subdivision on and be conscious of the placement of the sixteenth notes. As the interviewed premier band tuba player stated, “Chances are that [in an audition] the panel is tapping their toes along with you to see if you are steady. You will discover tendencies in the way you play this music which can transfer to similar phrases in other pieces of music.”<sup>264</sup> In addition, the tubist must also be aware of taking efficient breaths, since the only place to breathe are the final quarter note rests in measures 6 and 8. Failure to get large breaths in these spots will result in not reaching m. 12 with a good sound. This section is in octaves with most of the other low instruments

<sup>263</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

therefore in a performance or ensemble portion of an audition, matching their lengths and styles are important.<sup>265</sup>

Style must also be a consideration. This piece of music is probably the most well known piece listed in Chapter IV's survey, and every conductor has their own interpretation. Furthermore, it is performed often by every premier band and many of them have recorded it. Therefore, there is a good chance that a recording of the band holding the audition under the current conductor exists. If such a recording does exist, the tubist should use it as a guide to help find the best style and interpretation.

Another stylistic consideration is the age of this piece. It was premiered in 1897 which makes it the oldest original work for band discussed in this chapter. With its age come several performance practice considerations. Sousa's concept of balance was much different than that of current bands. "His balance was an hourglass shape, lighter in the middle and fuller in the treble and bass."<sup>266</sup> Today's bands, on the other hand, treat balance like a pyramid meaning that the lower and especially the middle parts in a performance will need to be stronger than in the past to allow each section to be heard equally. For example, the opening starts with a unison *forte* that moves into large chords that are thematically meant to reference the quarter note portion of the dogfight section.<sup>267</sup> If this dynamic is taken literally in all sections, the band will not have the balance that most contemporary bands strive for. For the tuba player, this means that playing at a slightly less than *fortissimo* might create a more balanced sound by allowing the middle voices to be heard more clearly. Additionally, even though the first note of the

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<sup>265</sup> Sousa, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, 18-19.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid, 9-16.

piece has no accent, the current performance practice in most military bands is to start the piece with a strong first note, which means adding a clear articulation to that note.<sup>268</sup>

The final section to examine in this work is the dogfight section which is located right after the trio and right before the *Grandioso* section or more specifically the pickup to mm. 70-93.



Figure 39. Stars and Stripes Forever by John Philip Sousa; Tuba Part, Measures 69-93 © Copyright 1951 by John Church Company now owned by Carl Fischer LLC. New York, New York 10012 Reprinted by Permission.

Musically the dogfight section is usually louder and rhythmically more intense. It also often uses a call and response between various sections of the band. The term *dogfight* is given because these sections are in a musical battle similar to the air battle of two planes in a war which is often called a dogfight.

This section also has several issues that the tubist must be aware of including rhythmic accuracy, tonal clarity, and proper interpretation. First, be careful rhythmically of the repeated eighth notes and quarter notes. The eighth notes tend to drag and the quarter notes tend to rush, but the easiest rhythmic error to overlook is the rests. Make sure, for example, the quarter note passage in m. 78 is in the correct place and not too early or late. This is a good place to record oneself and check for tendencies in counting errors.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid, 9-16.

Be careful of clarity and accuracy in the slurs and accents. For example, the repeated eighth notes are for the most part slur two-tongue two. Whether these notes are single or double-tongued, the second of the slurred notes has a tendency to be played as if there is a staccato even though none is written. In general, the measures with eighth notes tend to be played too short anyways so any added shortness should be avoided. The tendency is also to make the repeated eighth notes after the slurred notes weaker. The repeated quarter notes in measures 88 and 90 must also be in time with equal in volume and length to one another. The tendency is to make the second one weaker. When practicing these sections, focus on note equality and consistency.

Finally there is a stylistic issue in the measures leading up to the *Grandioso* section that needs to be discussed. Upon repeating the dogfight, it is sometimes common for the conductor to put a *rallentando* there. One tubist interviewed stated, “I would avoid doing this in an audition situation. Just play it steadily and let the conductor decide such things.”<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

## Toccata Marziale-Ralph Vaughan Williams

**Allegro maestoso.**

Measures 1-158 of the Tuba Part, featuring dynamics such as *f*, *sim.*, *p*, *p cresc.*, *ff*, *marc.*, *pp*, *mp*, and *dim.*. The score includes rehearsal marks 1 through 11.

Figure 40. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 1-158  
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Figure 40 (continued) shows the Tuba Part of the Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams, measures 12 through 21. The notation is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. The measures are numbered 12 through 21. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests, as well as dynamic markings like *p*, *f*, *ff*, *cresc.*, *marc.*, *allargando*, *rit.*, and *poco f cantabile*.

Figure 40 (continued). Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 1-158 © Copyright 1924 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

The next tuba part that will be examined in this document is *Toccata Marziale* by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The entire part is challenging and could be requested on a premier band audition. The most commonly requested excerpts in this piece are the opening to m. 15 (rehearsal number 3), the pickup note to m. 33-51 (two before rehearsal number 7-rehearsal number 9), and the pickup to mm. 91-124 (rehearsal number 14-19). Occasionally, a committee will also want to hear m. 126 to the end as well.<sup>270</sup>

The tempo indication is *Allegro maestoso* and the original score does not give a more specific tempo. The most recent edition, edited by Frank Battisti, suggests a tempo of quarter note = 104-112.<sup>271</sup> The piece is in 3/4 and because British band music tends to move at a slower more majestic tempo to its American counterpart, the tempo does not need to go any faster. Attempting to go faster can also amplify the issues with accuracy and clarity that are difficult throughout the part. Other issues to be aware of are having a quality lower register, articulations, phrasing, breathing, and tempo consistency. Each excerpt is unique, but they all share many similar difficulties. Therefore many of the suggestions made in the first excerpt can be carried into the others.

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<sup>270</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 6 December 2011.

<sup>271</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Toccata Marziale*, ed. Frank Battisti, Milwaukee, WI: Hawkes and Sons, 1924, original, 2005, current edition.





Figure 41. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 1-15  
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The first excerpt is the opening fifteen measures and is the initial statement of the primary melody. The tuba is doubled with the euphoniums, bassoons, bass clarinet, and saxophones so that in a performance, the tubist will need to be conscious of blending, balance and clarity with these other sections. In an audition, the tubist must once again deal with the *divisi* that are found throughout. As with all *divisi*, if not specified, learn both parts. Usually, however, as with the other works in this chapter, the lower octave is requested most often. The one place that is an exception is m. 12-14 (three before rehearsal number 3) where it is common for the committee to request the upper part. This opening statement needs to be full yet light. Play it too long, and the line will sound heavy. Play it too short, and it will lose clarity. A bold, light character should be the goal when interpreting note lengths. Dynamics can also affect the performance of the excerpt. The excerpt begins at *forte* and playing too loud can not only slow the excerpt down but hurt the response and clarity.<sup>272</sup> For help finding a *typical* British sound, listen to other band and orchestral works by Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, and Gordon Jacob as

<sup>272</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

well as well known British bands like the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra.

Beyond the overall character, the next most important aspect is clarity. This is particularly difficult because of the general lower register and difficult fingering patterns. If the tubist's lower register is not strong enough, use some of the techniques mentioned in similar excerpts in this chapter such as Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* and Grainger's *Lincolnshire Posy*: "Rufford Park Poachers" will be equally useful here. As for the finger coordination, the excerpt involves many awkward passages. For example, the opening interval involves going from the 4<sup>th</sup> (pinky) and 5<sup>th</sup> (thumb) valves to first valve (index finger).<sup>273</sup> This is awkward, especially since it must also be in time with the tongue. Choosing to use an alternate fingering such as fingering the F 1-4 instead of 4-5 would help the coordination but hurt the intonation. And since this interval of a perfect fourth is so exposed and integral to the melody, an alternate fingering is not a good choice in spots like this. Instead, use some of the suggestions found earlier in this chapter, like fingering through the passage without producing a tone, and playing the passage *legato* so that focus can be on the finger coordination. The fingers must move simultaneously. Even the slightest problems in coordination can hurt the tubist's performance.

Also, pay attention to the different articulations. Most notes in this excerpt are marked *staccato* but there are occasional passages marked *tenuto*. Make sure these articulations are clear and distinctly different.

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<sup>273</sup> As was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, these fingerings are for a CC contrabass tuba since that is almost exclusively the primary key used by tuba players in and auditioning for premier military bands in the United States.

Breath choices can play a big part in both clarity and tempo stability. Taking more breaths early will help the tubist get through the latter parts of the excerpt. For example, though it is possible to play the first two measures on one breath, taking one after each dotted quarter note will keep the tubist full of air later. The bigger the breaths that are taken, the more it will affect tempo, support, and clarity. After the initial two measures, the next six have very few convenient places to breathe. Finding eighth notes with *staccatos* such as the first eighth note in m. 5 (rehearsal number 1) to take small sips of air are a priority. This is especially true if the breath makes musical sense. The opening interval is found seven times in this excerpt, and breathing before this interval makes sense musically. The one exception is in the third measure. Because of the *tenuto* articulations that coincide with the interval here, a breath in this location is not possible. Decide on these breath choices, mark them in the music, and practice them. Playing with a metronome and recording this excerpt is particularly important because they will help identify when the tubist's breaths are negatively affecting the other aspects of the excerpt like tempo. It is very easy to inadvertently take slightly long breaths and drag the tempo in a way that might not otherwise be noticeable.



Figure 42. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 30-52  
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At the pickup to m. 33, pay attention mainly to making a full, clear, articulated sound and place the syncopated accents well. Note all of the markings from the measure before #7 through the next 6-7 measures. “Play full, keep the tempo moving, stay in tune, and be aware of some ways the music is emphasized.”<sup>274</sup> For example, be careful to accent where the music indicates. These accents do not always fall where the tubist might expect.

The tuba player needs to be “kind of like a chameleon” in this work which is particularly apparent in this excerpt.<sup>275</sup> By chameleon, the author is describing how the tuba part is constantly shifting between melody, counter-melody, and more supportive roles. The tubist must therefore be able to identify when he/she is playing each role and change (like a chameleon) to match these shifts. This is complicated by the fact that this piece uses a lot of imitation and the melody is continually shifting from one beat to

<sup>274</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

another. A comparison of the opening and the section after rehearsal number 6 can provide a good example.



Figure 43. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 1-2 and 32-36 © Copyright 1924 by Hawkes & Son (London) Ltd. Reprinted by Permission.

In the opening, the melodic line begins on the pickup to m. 1 and is played in octaves by the tuba, euphoniums, bassoons, and the saxophone choir. In most performances, the emphasis of the melody is given to the downbeat of the opening measure and continues in a similar pattern throughout this section. Compare that line to the line that the tuba has in the third measure of #6 (m. 32), which is a modified and modulated version of this same melody doubled with the euphonium and bass trombone. The tubas again have the melody however this time it starts on beat four with an accent on the *and* of beat one. This completely changes the feel of the melody and must be brought out in a performance. The tuba player must realize however that by m. 35, he/she is no longer playing the melody and have taken a supportive role. Then just two measures later, the tuba shifts again into more of a countermelody role. Recognizing these shifts throughout the work are keys to proper interpretation.

Finally, there are a few instructions in this section that could be confusing. First, in mm. 37-40, there are slurs with staccatos written simultaneously. Play the articulation

that are marked and think of the slurs more like phrase markings that are meant to show the tubist where the syncopation is. There are also numerous *fortissimos* and in most cases no indication that the dynamics have changed to need the new dynamic. Most of these dynamics coincide with a melodic entrance, and the *fortissimo* is to ensure that whatever the tubist decided to do dynamically as their chameleon-like role changed, he/she is again at the appropriate volume when their role changes.

The musical score for the Tuba Part, Measures 90-124 of Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams, is presented in bass clef with a key signature of two flats. The score includes measures 14 through 19. Measure 14 begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Measure 15 features a *simile* marking. Measure 16 includes a *poco f cantabile* marking. Measure 17 has a *marc.* marking. Measure 18 is marked *allargando* and features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. Measure 19 also features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 44. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 90-124  
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Many of the same ideas that have been discussed already can be transferred to the later excerpts. The melodies and style from the first half of the work also transfer to these sections and as such, range, clarity, tone, and note length are still concerns. Maintain a



light and bouncy articulation while not playing too long or too short. Be aware of tempo problems, practice with a metronome and an audio recorder, and know when the line is melodic or harmonic in origin. Finally, be aware that there is also a misprint in the third measure of rehearsal number 17 (m. 114); the C should be a C-sharp. Earlier editions failed to change this note and those editions may be in most band libraries. Later editions of the score have corrected this, but the piece has been so popular for so long, that most people own an older edition in which the error is not corrected.

Figure 45. Toccata Marziale by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Tuba Part, Measures 124-158  
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The final excerpt begins almost identically to the second excerpt which began in m. 26. For examples of how to perform this excerpt, refer to the suggestions for that section. In m. 139, the part changes up slightly, but if the tubist is careful of the note groupings in mm. 139-142 in a similar way to the excerpt at m. 37, the part will be fine. Between mm. 147-152, it may be necessary to leave out of an eighth note or two and

stagger breaths in a performance. If requested on an audition, leaving out a D-flat would be the best option.

*Oberon Overture-Carl Maria von Weber, arranged by Mayhew Lake*



Figure 46. Overture to Oberon by Carl Maria von Weber, Arranged by Mayhew L. Lake; Tuba Part, Measures 109-139 © Copyright by Carl Fischer, LLC, New York, NY Reprinted by Permission.

The final piece in this chapter is Mayhew Lake's arrangement of the overture to the opera *Oberon* by Carl Maria von Weber.<sup>276</sup> The most important excerpt in the tuba part is mm. 109 (17 before B) to 139 (13 after B). The score begins with a slow introduction before moving into the main faster portion of the overture where the main excerpt occurs. In this section, the exact tempo is not clear except to say, "Allegro con fuoco" at the beginning. Fortunately, there are nearly 80 reliable commercially released recordings including two modern recordings of this arrangement by United States premier military bands, one of these being recorded by the United States Navy Band and

<sup>276</sup> Carl Maria von Weber, *Oberon Overture*, Boca Raton, FL: Edwin F. Calmus Co., Inc. 1826.



the other by the United States Marine Band “President’s Own.” The orchestral version has been recorded by many leading orchestras, including the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. The average tempo for the *Allegro con fuoco* usually ranges from quarter note = 138-144. Tubists playing the arrangement have to deal with upper range accuracy, clarity, fast articulations, coordination of the tongue and the fingers, rhythmic accuracy, and breath control.

As with the overture to *Russlan and Ludmilla*, the original score of the overture to *Oberon* did not include a tuba part. This arrangement’s part comes primarily from the double bass. In addition, this arrangement was written in 1937, meaning that the tuba part was most likely intended to be played by a section of tubas that included both bass tubas (E-flat tubas) and contrabass tubas (CC or BB-flat tubas). In a performance, if there are three tubists, having one tubist play the upper octave on bass tuba and the other two play the lower octave on contrabass tuba would be a great benefit. Since much of the tuba part is doubled in the low winds and euphoniums, some experimentation with omitting the upper octave when unnecessary and having all players play the bottom octave might yield positive results. This is especially true since the upper part of the *divisi* can sometimes go into a range that could be overbearing in an ensemble setting. Remember that the ultimate goal in performing these arrangements is to make them sound as close to the original music as possible. Because of that, studying the original score and finding places to apply these suggestions is very helpful.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence by author, digital recording, Jackson, MS, 25 December 2011.

Unfortunately, in an audition this experimentation is not possible. The tubist needs to be able to play the entire excerpt, which can lead to breathing and accuracy issues. As for the *divisi*, unlike the Glinka that was looked at earlier, the upper octave is the most often requested in an audition. Despite the fact that this octave was originally intended for and easier on bass tuba, it is recommended to learn the excerpt on contrabass tuba. This is because audition committees will either specifically request for the candidates to only bring one tuba or pick music that makes bringing a second tuba to an audition impractical.<sup>278</sup>

To help learn the excerpt, it is useful to split it into two sections, the first being the music leading up to rehearsal letter B and the second being the music that starts eight measures after letter B.



Figure 47. Overture to Oberon by Carl Maria von Weber, Arranged by Mayhew L. Lake; Tuba Part, Measures 109-131 © Copyright by Carl Fischer, LLC, New York, NY Reprinted by Permission.

Starting the excerpt accurately in the upper octave can be difficult. It begins on a D above middle C and has no preparation in the part to help the tubist hear the pitch. In a practice room, practicing the part down an octave can be helpful. The tubist must be able

<sup>278</sup> In other words, if the entire list of excerpts is lower and better suited for a contrabass tuba, then bringing a bass tuba to only play this excerpt is unrealistic for most people.

hear the D before playing it. The initial dynamic is *fortissimo* so the D has to be confident and strong. In a performance however, if the D is missed, do not let it affect the rest of the music. Recover and make sure the sixteenth note scale that follows is correct. It is easy to get discouraged when something like this happens in an audition, but it is also rare that a committee will pass on a candidate because of one cracked note.

After the first note, the rest of the line is primarily sixteenth-note scales. Watch out for the accuracy of the dotted eighth and quarter notes also. They must be full and rhythmically correct. The need to breathe at the end of some or all of these dotted eighth notes can cause them to be short if not careful. Poor breaths can also cause the scales that follow to be late or slow. Do not forget the accents. The overall goal should be to play as lightly as possible. Even though the passage is mostly scales, the speed might make the part difficult to learn. As was done in earlier excerpts, do not hesitate to practice the work at a slower more manageable tempo. Furthermore, playing the line down an octave and/or without tonguing can be particularly useful. There is a tendency for the multiple tonguing to be too short causing the clarity of the line to suffer. If there are tempo problems, it is often the tubas that are the cause, so practice with a metronome.<sup>279</sup> It may also be helpful to add a slight accent to the sixteenth note beats in measures 111 and 112. As has been stated previously, if multiple tonguing is used at the performance tempo, then a slower practice tempo should also use multiple tonguing in order to avoid the inevitable transition that would be necessary if a single tonguing technique were used at the slower tempo.

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<sup>279</sup> Anonymous Premier Band Tuba Player, e-mail correspondence.



*Figure 48.* Overture to Oberon by Carl Maria von Weber, Arranged by Mayhew L. Lake; Tuba Part, Measures 132-139 © Copyright by Carl Fischer, LLC, New York, NY Reprinted by Permission.

Many of the same techniques for learning the first half of the excerpt can be transferred to the second half that begins at 8 after letter B (m. 134). Unlike the first part of the excerpt, the top octave is different than the lower octave and therefore cannot be omitted. The bottom line quarter notes come from the original version's bass trombone part and cannot be omitted either. The upper octave comes from the string bass part and is more commonly requested for in an audition. In addition to the issues that were mentioned earlier, this half of the excerpt also requires a difficult combination of slurs and tonguing. Start out slowly and be careful with articulations and note accuracy. The sixteenth notes in mm. 135-137 as well as the staccato notes after each pair of slurred notes in mm. 138-139 are particularly problematic from a clarity standpoint. Be sure that all of these notes speak accurately. There are a number of alternate fingering possibilities and experimenting with them can prove useful. For example, fingering the D on the second beat of m. 136 with fourth valve instead of first valve can help avoid the lip slur that, at the performance tempo can be difficult. Another possibility is playing the D flats and G-flats 2-4 which can turn beats two and three into a repeating pattern and aid in the lip slurs. The added valves, however, could slow down the agility and hurt the intonation. The author prefers the natural fingerings, but acknowledges that other options may work.

Additionally, accuracy problems can also be an indication that the tongue and the fingers are not working in tandem. To avoid this, as was done in the first half of the excerpt, begin preparation of the excerpt at a tempo that facilitates accuracy and increase the tempo gradually as security in the fingering pattern has been established. Playing this slurred and down an octave early on will also make a difference. The pattern in m. 138-139 follows a predictable pattern, but the tempo and fingerings can be very challenging. Overall, remember to play as lightly as possible. Even if the tubist struggles with clarity and the other technical aspects that were mentioned previously, it is important to be as musical as possible.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary of Selected Ideas

A number of conclusions can be made based on the information from the earlier chapters. First, in Chapter I it was stated that there are 42 current tuba players playing in one of the nine premier military bands, which is comparable to the 49 tuba players employed by the major ICSOM orchestras in the United States. We also saw that, even though from year to year they may fluctuate, the openings for these groups occur at a comparable rate (24 openings in the premier bands versus 22 openings in the ICSOM orchestras since 2000). On the other hand, it was stated that these auditions are won by a different level of tuba player, with the premier bands tending to hire younger professionals and students and the ICSOM orchestras hiring professionals that have more experience, often coming from smaller regional orchestras. Finally, as was seen in Chapters II and III, there are a number of differences not only between the orchestras and the premier bands but also between each military band. A conclusion therefore with this information can be that because of the quantity of tubists, frequency of openings, and the differences that each has, there should be a similar amount of scholarly research into these various avenues of employment. This, however, is not the case. In fact, little has been written about the various military bands as compared to the orchestras.

There is a second level of conclusions that can be made by looking specifically at the music requested in the auditions. Though this document deliberately focuses on the premier band music and avoids significant examination and comparison of orchestral audition music, it was shown in Chapters III and IV that the pieces required for a premier

band tuba audition are much different than what would be found for an orchestral audition.<sup>280</sup> Musical overlap with an original orchestral excerpt in band auditions is rare. There are, on the other hand, many orchestral transcriptions found in premier band auditions. However, as was seen in the analysis from Chapter V, these transcriptions usually either come from music that did not originally have a tuba part or give the tuba players a much busier part than they had in the original version. In fact, as was stated in Chapters II and III, it is uncommon to have a band audition include orchestral excerpts. This conclusion is logical, considering the reverse is also. In other words, just as orchestral auditions do not request band music, it is logical that band auditions would not request orchestral music.

Based on the information from the latter questions in that survey and the excerpt analysis in Chapter V, even in the case of the transcriptions, there are aspects in these works that do not relate to orchestral auditions. For example, orchestral tubists rarely have to deal with blending with other tuba players because they are usually the only tuba player in the ensemble. He/she also rarely has passages that require staggered breathing like was seen in Hindemith's *Symphony in B flat for Band*. And the orchestral tubist rarely has a work that is so extensive that the entire part could be considered an excerpt as was seen in *Toccata Marziale*. It is also rare to have long strings of technical passages like, the *Oberon Overture* in the orchestral repertoire, at least for more than a few measures. The orchestral tubist must be a master of both the bass tuba and the contrabass tuba whereas the premier band tuba player is almost exclusively auditioned on and expected to be the master of the contrabass tuba. This can be seen through the music

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<sup>280</sup> The auditions for each instrument are different. Therefore, other instruments may include orchestral music. Refer to writings more specific to those instruments to understand their requirements.

found on the auditions. It is rare in premier band auditions, for example, to find a part like the excerpts commonly requested from Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.<sup>281</sup> A piece like this challenges the tubist's upper range much more than anything on the list from the survey and in fact is commonly played on bass tuba. This opposes what is seen in band auditions because they almost exclusively emphasize the middle and lower registers. With all these musical differences, there should be a comparable number of excerpt books to aid the tubist's preparation for premier band auditions, but there are, in fact, none. In fact, except for the two dissertations mentioned in Chapter I that do not deal directly with military auditions, there is very little written on these tuba excerpts for the potential premier band tuba player to study.

#### Further Study

This document is still incomplete. Chapter V dealt with only ten excerpts. There are another sixty-six band works that received a vote in Chapter IV's survey. And though the works chosen for study in this document were chosen partially because they were higher on the survey results, the other excerpts could easily also be found in an audition. However, a full study of every band work is beyond the scope of this document. In order to fully give potential premier band tuba players an equal opportunity to prepare these band works and have comparable representation to the orchestral counterparts, a more comprehensive excerpt book must be undertaken.

So, to conclude this document and prepare for this necessary excerpt book, a potential table of contents will now be presented. The organizational formula will be similar to the Barbara Payne euphonium excerpt book that was mentioned in Chapter I.

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<sup>281</sup> Berlioz, Hector, *Symphonie Fantastique*. Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, Germany. 1900.



That book is organized with separate chapters on marches, transcriptions, original band works, original orchestral works that use euphonium, and finally a chapter with information related to auditions and life in the bands. This book will be organized in a similar fashion, except that it will exclude the chapter on the original orchestral works since that is already covered in orchestral excerpt books. The use of this organizational method is ideal because it de-emphasizes any one particular excerpt and therefore promotes the learning of all of the excerpts to give the tubist a broad general knowledge of all of band literature that is necessary to win one of these premier band positions. Furthermore, organizing by other means, such as by difficulty or alphabetically have their own problems with objectivity or the overall appearance that would be less useful for systematic study. The works chosen are based on the results to the first question on the survey that can be found in Chapter IV.

Potential Excerpt Book Table of Contents<sup>282</sup>*Chapter 1: Marches*

Purple Carnival March	Alford Harry
Skyliner March	Alford, Harry
Joyce's 71st Regimental March	Boyer/Lake
Boys of the Old Brigade	Chambers, W. Paris
Circus Bee	Filmore, Henry
Florentiner March	Fucik/Lake
Thunder and Blazes March	Fucik/Laurendan
In Storm and Sunshine March	Heed, J.C.
Barnum and Bailey's Favorite	King, Karl
"Melody Shop" March	King, Karl
George Washington Bicentennial March	Sousa, John Philip
Stars and Stripes Forever	Sousa, John Philip

*Chapter 2: Transcriptions*

Le Corsaire Overture	Berlioz/Beeler
Hungarian March	Berlioz/Lake
Roman Carnival Overture	Berlioz/Safranek
Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story"	Bernstein/Polster
Academic Festival Overture	Brahms/Safranek
Espana Rhapsodie	Chabrier/Safranek
Universal Judgement	De Nardis, Camille/Cafarella
Russian Sailors' Dance	Gliere/Leidzen
Russlan and Ludmilla Overture	Glinka/Winterbottom
March from "Symphonic Metamorphosis"	Hindemith/Wilson
The Planets: 1st Movement-Mars	Holst, Gustav
The Planets: 2nd Movement-Jupiter	Holst, Gustav
Variations on "America"	Ives/Schumann
Colas Breugnon Overture	Kabalevsky/Hunsberger
Les Preludes	Liszt/Brown
Mazeppa	Liszt, Franz
Fingal's Cave Overture	Mendelsohn/Seredy
Frankeltanz	Meyerbeer/Lake
Marriage of Figaro Overture	Mozart, W.A.
Pictures at an Exhibition	Mussorgsky/Hindsley

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<sup>282</sup> This works found here are taken directly from the survey found in Chapter IV. At that point, the results of the survey were listed first based on the number of times they were selected by tubists in the first question of the survey. Then by alphabetical order based on the composer's last name and finally by the title of the work. In this case, the works are put into three categories (marches, transcriptions, and original band works). From there they follow the same alphabetical layout as the results of the survey. Finally, this list is longer than what the actual table of contents will likely be because of copyright issues that are likely to arise. This list therefore will serve as a guide.

Fountains of Rome  
 Sensemaya  
 Donna Diana Overture  
 Scheherazade  
 Barber of Seville Overture  
 Italian in Algiers  
 Bartered Bride Overture  
 Circus Polka  
 1812 Overture  
 Caprice Italien  
 La Forza Del Destino  
 Manzoni Requiem  
 Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral  
 The Flying Dutchman Overture  
 Die Meistersinger Overture  
 Rienzi Overture  
 Seigfried Fantasie  
 Der Freischutz Overture  
 Euryanthe Overture  
 Oberon Overture

Respighi/Odom  
 Revueltas/Bencriscutto  
 Reznicek/Meyers  
 Rimsky-Korsakov/Hindsley  
 Rossini, Gioachino  
 Rossini/Calliett  
 Smetana/Safranek  
 Stravinsky, Igor  
 Tchaikovsky/Laurendeau  
 Tchaikovsky/Laurendeau  
 Verdi/Lake  
 Verdi/Mollenhaur  
 Wagner/Calliet  
 Wagner/Laurendeau  
 Wagner/Moser-Tobani/Kent  
 Wagner/Patterson  
 Wagner/Seidel  
 Weber/Moser-Tobani  
 Weber/Safranek  
 Weber/Lake

### *Chapter 3: Original Band Works*

Third Symphony  
 Suite of Old American Dances  
 Celebration Overture  
 An American Salute  
 Gumsuckers March  
 Lincolnshire Posy  
 Marching Song of Democracy  
 J'ai été au bal  
 Symphony in B flat for Band  
 First Suite in E flat for Military Band  
 Hammersmith  
 Second Suite for Military Band in F  
 Danse Foltre  
 A Centennial Overture  
 Dionysiaques  
 Chester  
 Eternal Father, Strong to Save  
 Festive Overture  
 Dance Movements  
 Cloudsplitter Overture  
 Crown Imperial  
 Toccata Marziale

Barnes, James  
 Bennett, Robert Russell  
 Creston, Paul  
 Gould, Morton  
 Grainger, Percy  
 Grainger, Percy  
 Grainger, Percy  
 Grantham, Donald  
 Hindemith, Paul  
 Holst, Gustav  
 Holst, Gustav  
 Holst, Gustav  
 Holst, Gustav  
 Nixon, Roger  
 Schmitt, Florent  
 Schumann, William  
 Smith, Claude T.  
 Smith, Claude T.  
 Sparke, Phillip  
 Stamp, Jack  
 Walton, William  
 Williams, Ralph Vaughan

With these excerpts mastered, a tubist will be well prepared for any premier military band audition. The candidate should also be prepared to play a solo and be requested a number of excerpts in sightreading. Some bands request a prepared solo, but every band uses sightreading. The weighting of the sightreading can vary from one band to the next, but it is usually made up of more obscure music, such as lesser known marches or works written specifically for that band. Often these works are not even published and the band specifically chooses the music for sightreading because it will be unknown to the candidates and therefore levels the playing field between a candidate that has mastered all of the band literature and one that has mastered all the playing techniques found in the band literature but is less experienced in the band field. In the end, mastery of the excerpts above, solid sightreading ability, and being physically and mentally prepared for a life in the military will go a long way to winning an audition, but it is not a guarantee. There is no way to predict exactly what each band is looking for and no one is perfect. So, on the day of the audition, mistakes will happen. Proper preparation and a positive attitude will go a long way to putting the candidate in the best position possible to win the premier military band position, and that is all that the candidate can control.

## APPENDIX A

### GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT MILITARY TERMS, PROCEDURES, AND ACRONYMS

AFSOM (Armed Forces School of Music): Located on Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek and Fort Story near Norfolk, Virginia and is used by the Army, Marines, and Navy. This is an advanced training school required for all active duty (non-premier) bandsmen in these branches regardless of prior civilian training. The time spent there can vary for a number of reasons, but for the Army the time is approximately ten weeks and for the Navy and Marines it is approximately six months. While at the school, students receive music theory, aural skills, private lessons, and marching training in a joint armed forces environment. So if you are in the Navy, you will have Marine classmates for music theory and aural skills. The Army formerly joined them in these classes. The recent changes mentioned in Chapter II have shortened the time Army musicians spend at the AFSOM, separating their program further from the Navy and Marines. For private lessons, there is one instructor for each instrument. The instructor of tuba, for example, can come from any of the three branches and teaches all of the student tuba players from these branches. In addition, the tuba instructor must score high on a playing audition to be eligible, and is therefore considered one of the best tuba players in the active military. Each student must also attend branch specific training at this school. For example, Army has its own headquarters at the School of Music and its students must still do Army specific daily physical training, military exercises, and marching band training (learning basics to marching as well as the procedures and maneuvers for specific ceremonies that

might need to be mastered). In addition, the AFSOM also serves as an advanced training school for the Army bandsmen to get promoted to E-6 and E-7.

ASVAB: Acronym that stands for Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

This test is given to all potential new military members to test the person's base knowledge in wide range of topics from general knowledge to automotive mechanics. The purpose is to help direct new enlistees to a compatible job. For musicians, this is mostly a technicality, as they already have a designated job.

BILLET: A generic term for the number of a certain type of personnel any unit in the military is authorized. Therefore, if a band is billeted three tuba players, then they are authorized to have up to three tuba players in their band.

Charlie One Audition: In the Army, this is an audition to determine if you are musically qualified to be in one of the more selective MACOM bands. Prior to the new Army scoring system, if you received at least a 3.0 out of 4.0 in any official audition then you were qualified to be a member of one of the three MACOM Bands. The new scoring is 30 out of 40 to be Charlie One qualified.

HYT (High Year Tenure): Every branch of the military has a policy called high year tenure (HYT). With this policy, you have a time limit to make certain ranks. If you fail to make this rank then you are no longer allowed to remain in the military. In the case of someone who has not reached their twenty year retirement date, the service member is given severance pay and told that he/she can no longer remain in the military. As rank increases, the time limit is extended. This policy is the reason why military members who remain in the military even after the twenty years of service needed to receive his or her pension and benefits are eventually forced to retire. The time limits are different for each

branch, but the Air Force and Navy's enlisted personnel especially struggle with this. There are a number of factors that lead to this including a shrinking military that no longer needs as many upper enlisted, an increase in educated military musicians that creates greater competition when a spot does become available, and difficult testing and promotion procedures.<sup>283</sup>

MACOM Bands: MACOM stands for Major Command and is an army term for the headquarters of commanders in specific regions of the world. Three of these are headquarters to upper level active duty bands, The Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Band, Fort Monroe, VA; The Army Ground Forces Band, Fort MacPherson, GA; and the United States Army Europe (USAREUR) Band and Chorus, Heidelberg, Germany.

MEPS: Military Entrance Processing Station is the location where all new military members take physicals, get evaluated mentally, sign their initial contract and are sworn in.

MOS/AFSC: Military Occupational Specialty/Air Force Specialty Code-An alphanumeric designator for all military occupations. For example, all regional Army musicians have an MOS of 42R. The Air Force and other branches use a similar situation. This is the administrative code that these branches use to separate their various occupations.

MTA: Musician Technical Assistant. In the Marines, these are people who are responsible for auditioning potential bandsmen. They are musicians that temporarily become a part of the recruiting branch.

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<sup>283</sup> Anonymous United States Navy Regional Band Tuba Player, phone interview.

NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer): the leadership of the enlisted ranks. The Navy and Coast Guard usually consider all petty officers and above to be NCOs. The Air Force, Army, and Marines consider the corporal, sergeant, and above to be NCOs. Though it varies from branch to branch, NCOs ranked E-4, E-5, and some branch's E-6s are considered to be junior NCOs. Any enlisted rank above this is considered a senior NCO.

PAC-20: "The Marine Corps Music Section (PAC-20) reviews, evaluates, and manages changes to the manpower plans and policies governing the following: accession, training, promotion and assignment of Marine Corps musicians and operations and functions of Marine Corps Bands. Marine Corps Musical Units provide musical support for ceremonies, community relations and recruiting initiatives of the Marine Corps."<sup>284</sup>

PAY SCALE: Military pay and benefits are based directly on the person's rank. The following chart (Figures 50 and 51) is the official basic pay scale for 2011 according to the Defense Financial and Accounting Service (DFAS). See Rank and Ratings for a better understanding of the left column of the pay scale. The top row is related to time in the service. So to understand the chart, if the reader looks at an E-3 with 2 or less years in service, he/she will see that that individual made \$1,729.80 as a base monthly salary when this chart was announced in 2011.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> "Manpower and Reserve Affairs," MPO-20, 18 October 2013, accessed 18 October 2013, [https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M\\_RA\\_HOME/MP/MPO/MPO-20](https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/portal/page/portal/M_RA_HOME/MP/MPO/MPO-20).

<sup>285</sup> "Ncosupport.com," 6 June 2011, accessed 6 June 2011, <http://ncosupport.com/index.html>.



Pay Grade	2 or less	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18
O-10 <sup>1</sup>											
O-9 <sup>1</sup>											
O-8 <sup>1</sup>	9,530.70	9,842.70	10,050.00	10,107.90	10,366.50	10,798.20	10,899.00	11,308.80	11,426.40	11,779.80	12,291.00
O-7 <sup>1</sup>	7,919.10	8,287.20	8,457.30	8,592.60	8,837.70	9,079.80	9,359.70	9,638.70	9,918.60	10,798.20	11,540.70
O-6 <sup>1</sup>	5,869.50	6,448.50	6,871.50	6,871.50	6,897.60	7,193.40	7,232.40	7,232.40	7,643.40	8,370.30	8,796.90
O-5	4,893.00	5,512.20	5,893.80	5,965.80	6,203.70	6,346.20	6,659.40	6,889.20	7,186.20	7,640.70	7,856.70
O-4	4,221.90	4,887.30	5,213.40	5,286.00	5,588.70	5,913.30	6,317.40	6,632.10	6,851.10	6,976.50	7,049.10
O-3	3,711.90	4,208.10	4,542.00	4,951.80	5,188.80	5,449.20	5,617.80	5,894.70	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00
O-2	3,207.30	3,652.80	4,207.20	4,349.10	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50
O-1	2,784.00	2,897.40	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50
O-3 <sup>2</sup>				4,951.80	5,188.80	5,449.20	5,617.80	5,894.70	6,128.10	6,262.20	6,444.90
O-2 <sup>1</sup>				4,349.10	4,438.50	4,580.10	4,818.60	5,002.80	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20
O-1 <sup>1</sup>				3,502.50	3,740.40	3,878.70	4,020.30	4,158.90	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10
W-5											
W-4	3,836.10	4,126.50	4,245.00	4,361.40	4,562.10	4,760.70	4,961.40	5,264.40	5,529.60	5,781.90	5,988.30
W-3	3,502.80	3,648.90	3,798.60	3,847.80	4,004.70	4,313.70	4,635.00	4,786.20	4,961.10	5,142.00	5,466.00
W-2	3,099.90	3,393.00	3,483.30	3,545.40	3,746.40	4,059.00	4,213.50	4,366.20	4,552.50	4,698.00	4,830.00
W-1	2,721.00	3,013.50	3,092.40	3,258.90	3,456.00	3,745.80	3,881.40	4,070.40	4,256.70	4,403.10	4,538.10
E-9 <sup>1</sup>							4,634.70	4,739.70	4,872.00	5,027.70	5,184.60
E-8						3,794.10	3,961.80	4,065.60	4,190.40	4,325.10	4,568.40
E-7	2,637.30	2,878.50	2,988.90	3,135.00	3,249.00	3,444.60	3,554.70	3,750.90	3,913.50	4,024.50	4,143.00
E-6	2,281.20	2,510.10	2,620.80	2,728.50	2,840.70	3,093.60	3,192.30	3,382.80	3,441.00	3,483.60	3,533.40
E-5	2,090.10	2,230.20	2,337.90	2,448.30	2,620.20	2,800.50	2,947.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50
E-4	1,916.10	2,014.20	2,123.40	2,230.80	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90
E-3	1,729.80	1,838.70	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00
E-2	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90
E-1 <sup>1</sup>	1,467.60										

Figure 49. 2011 Pay Scale for Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, and Enlisted Active Duty Personnel of the United States military, First Twenty Years of Service.

Pay Grade	Over 20	Over 22	Over 24	Over 26	Over 28	Over 30	Over 32	Over 34	Over 36	Over 38	Over 40
O-10 <sup>1</sup>	15,400.80	15,475.80	15,797.70	16,358.40	16,358.40	17,176.20	17,176.20	18,034.80	18,034.80	18,936.90	18,936.90
O-9 <sup>1</sup>	13,469.70	13,663.80	13,944.00	14,433.00	14,433.00	15,155.10	15,155.10	15,912.90	15,912.90	16,708.50	16,708.50
O-8 <sup>1</sup>	12,762.30	13,077.30	13,077.30	13,077.30	13,077.30	13,404.30	13,404.30	13,739.40	13,739.40	13,739.40	13,739.40
O-7 <sup>1</sup>	11,540.70	11,540.70	11,540.70	11,599.50	11,599.50	11,831.70	11,831.70	11,831.70	11,831.70	11,831.70	11,831.70
O-6 <sup>1</sup>	9,222.90	9,465.60	9,711.30	10,187.70	10,187.70	10,391.10	10,391.10	10,391.10	10,391.10	10,391.10	10,391.10
O-5	8,070.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30	8,313.30
O-4	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10	7,049.10
O-3	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00	6,039.00
O-2	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50	4,438.50
O-1	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50	3,502.50
O-3 <sup>2</sup>	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90	6,444.90
O-2 <sup>1</sup>	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20	5,140.20
O-1 <sup>1</sup>	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10	4,349.10
W-5	6,820.80	7,167.00	7,424.70	7,710.00	7,710.00	8,095.80	8,095.80	8,500.50	8,500.50	8,925.90	8,925.90
W-4	6,189.60	6,485.40	6,728.40	7,005.60	7,005.60	7,145.70	7,145.70	7,145.70	7,145.70	7,145.70	7,145.70
W-3	5,685.30	5,816.40	5,955.60	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90	6,144.90
W-2	4,987.80	5,091.60	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10	5,174.10
W-1	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60	4,701.60
E-9 <sup>1</sup>	5,436.60	5,649.30	5,873.40	6,215.70	6,215.70	6,526.20	6,526.20	6,852.90	6,852.90	7,195.80	7,195.80
E-8	4,691.70	4,901.70	5,017.80	5,304.60	5,304.60	5,411.10	5,411.10	5,411.10	5,411.10	5,411.10	5,411.10
E-7	4,189.20	4,342.80	4,425.60	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00	4,740.00
E-6	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40	3,533.40
E-5	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50	2,965.50
E-4	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90	2,325.90
E-3	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	1,950.00
E-2	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90	1,644.90

Figure 50. 2011 Pay Scale for Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, and Enlisted Active Duty Personnel of the United States military, After Year Twenty of Service.

This chart is only the service member's base salary. It does not include cost of living and other forms of pay that add to the basic pay such as free health care, food, and housing including off post housing for higher ranking individuals, married individuals, and their families which can dramatically increase the monthly pay.

PFT (Physical Fitness Test): Each branch of the military has a different set of standards for its physical training. Testing individuals on these standards is also relative to each branch however they all include some type of cardiovascular exercise and exercises that m. muscular strength like pushups and crunches.<sup>286</sup> There is also a height and weight standard. Every person needs to be within a certain weight for their height. For each height, there is a maximum and minimum weight. If this standard is not met, then the individual will need to take a body fat test. If the individual fails this test as well, he/she must go on a remedial program of diet and exercise to meet the standards. Each branch has a different set of standards which can be found in a number of ways including, talking to a recruiter and web sites such as military.com. If these standards are not met even after a remedial program, the individual could be discharged.

PROFILE: Being put on profile occurs when a person is temporarily unable to perform a portion of their daily duties. This is usually because of a medical issue such as a sprained ankle. If the service member is put on profile for this then he/she cannot be given any duty that would require them to aggravate the injury. A common example of this is when person develops shin splits from consistently running on unforgiving surfaces like pavement or brick. If this happens a doctor might give them a profile that says the service member does not have to wear boots in uniform. In addition, he/she

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<sup>286</sup> The one exception is the United States Coast Guard Band which has no physical fitness requirement.

might not be required to do anything that involves running or standing for extended periods of time (like a typical marching band performance) until the shin splits heal. They may exercise and be tested for the PFT on a stationary bike. It also allows them to get the necessary treatment/physical therapy to decrease the recovery time.

**RANK AND RATINGS:** Within each branch of the military, the rank structure is different with different titles for its members. They all follow the same pay grade structure however. If you are enlisted, you are assigned a pay grade from E-1 to E-10. If you are an officer, you are assigned a pay grade from O-1 to O-10.<sup>287</sup> There is also another set of ranks called Warrant Officers. These ranks are found in all the branches except the Air Force. The higher the number you are, then the higher the rank and subsequently the more pay, responsibility, and leadership you are given. Officers are different from enlisted personnel because each has been given a commission by their branch of the military to be leaders. They serve a similar role to a business executive in the civilian world. In addition, within the enlisted system, there is a point in each branch where your rank also comes with the title of Noncommissioned Officer (NCO). As might be expected from the title, these ranks are officers that have not received a commission. Their role is similar to the middle management of a big corporation. Members of the NCO Corps reach this point over time by promotion within the enlisted ranks. For the Air Force, all ranks of Sergeant or higher are considered NCOs. The Marines and the Army follow a similar system except they also consider the rank of Corporal to be a NCO. The Navy and Coast Guard normally consider any rank of Petty Officer or higher to be NCO. NCOs that are E-7 and above are given the additional title of Senior Non-commissioned

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<sup>287</sup> See Pay Grade that is covered earlier in this Appendix.

Officer and are considered the leaders of the enlisted ranks. Since there are far more enlisted than officers and the NCOs are the leaders on the enlisted, they are considered the “backbone” of the military. See figures 52, 53, and 54, for a layout of these ranks and ratings.

























































	NAVY	ARMY	AIR FORCE	MARINE CORPS	COAST GUARD
E-1	Seaman Recruit	Private	Airman Basic	Private	Seaman Recruit
E-2	 Seaman Apprentice	 Private E-2	 Airman	 Private First Class	 Seaman Apprentice
E-3	 Seaman	 Private First Class	 Airman First Class	 Lance Corporal	 Seaman
E-4	 Petty Officer Third Class	 Corporal Specialist	 Senior Airman	 Corporal	 Petty Officer Third Class
E-5	 Petty Officer Second Class	 Sergeant	 Staff Sergeant	 Sergeant	 Petty Officer Second Class
E-6	 Petty Officer First Class	 Staff Sergeant	 Technical Sergeant	 Staff Sergeant	 Petty Officer First Class
E-7	 Chief Petty Officer	 Sergeant First Class	 Master Sergeant First Sergeant	 Gunnery Sergeant	 Chief Petty Officer
E-8	 Senior Chief Petty Officer	 Master Sergeant First Sergeant	 Senior Master Sergeant First Sergeant	 Master Sergeant First Sergeant	 Senior Chief Petty Officer
E-9	 Master Chief Petty Officer	 Sergeant Major	 Chief Master Sergeant First Sergeant	 Sergeant Major	 Master Chief Petty Officer
	 Fleet/Command Master Chief Petty Officer	 Command Sergeant Major	 Command Chief Master Sergeant	 Master Gunnery Sergeant	 Command Master Chief Petty Officer
Special	 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy	 Sergeant Major of the Army	 Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force	 Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	 Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard

Figure 51. Ranks and Ratings for Enlisted Personnel in All Branches of the United States Military.<sup>288</sup>

<sup>288</sup>“United States Military Rank Insignia,” U.S. Department of Defense, October 18, 2013, accessed October 18, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/about/insignias/index.aspx>.

WARRANT		
NAVY	MARINES	ARMY
W-1	 WARRANT OFFICER	 WARRANT OFFICER
W-2  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
W-3  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
W-4  CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER
W-5	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER	 CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER

*Figure 52. Ranks and Ratings for Warrant Officers in All Branches of the United States Military.*<sup>289</sup>

<sup>289</sup>“Warrant Officer and Enlisted Interservice Insignia Comparisons,” Federation of American Scientists, October 18, 2013, accessed October 18, 2013, [http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/usmillogistics/warrant\\_enlisted\\_compare.html](http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/man/usmillogistics/warrant_enlisted_compare.html).






















































	NAVY	ARMY	AIR FORCE	MARINE CORPS	COAST GUARD
O-1	 Ensign	 Second Lieutenant	 Second Lieutenant	 Second Lieutenant	 Ensign
O-2	 Lieutenant Junior Grade	 First Lieutenant	 First Lieutenant	 First Lieutenant	 Lieutenant Junior Grade
O-3	 Lieutenant	 Captain	 Captain	 Captain	 Lieutenant
O-4	 Lieutenant Commander	 Major	 Major	 Major	 Lieutenant Commander
O-5	 Commander	 Lieutenant Colonel	 Lieutenant Colonel	 Lieutenant Colonel	 Commander
O-6	 Captain	 Colonel	 Colonel	 Colonel	 Captain
O-7	 Rear Admiral Lower Half	 Brigadier General	 Brigadier General	 Brigadier General	 Rear Admiral Lower Half
O-8	 Rear Admiral Upper Half	 Major General	 Major General	 Major General	 Rear Admiral Upper Half
O-9	 Vice Admiral	 Lieutenant General	 Lieutenant General	 Lieutenant General	 Vice Admiral
O-10	 Admiral	 General	 General	 General	 Admiral
Special	 Fleet Admiral	 General of the Army	 General of the Air Force		

Figure 53. Ranks and Ratings for Commissioned Officers in All Branches of the United States Military.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>290</sup> United States Military Rank Insignia,” U.S. Department of Defense, October 18, 2013, accessed October 18, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/about/insignias/index.aspx>.

TOE: stands for Table of Organization and Equipment. It defines what the strengths and purposes are for each military unit. Each unit's TOE is unique to that unit and defines who they take orders from, how many personnel they are allotted, what other units may fall under their command, and any other information needed to specifically identify that unit and its purpose for existence.

TDY (Temporary Duty Assignment): "The definition of TDY is Temporary Duty. The term is commonly used for short term assignments lasting a few days to up to 180 days and varies according to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard regulations for each military service or government organization. A TDY assignment can be extended beyond 180 days with authorization from the designated approval authority."<sup>291</sup> The expenses for these TDY assignments are paid for by the military.

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<sup>291</sup>"TDY Lodging-Government and Military TDY Housing, Apartment, and Hotels," TDYlodging.com, 23 June 2012, [www.tdylodging.com](http://www.tdylodging.com).



## APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS<sup>292</sup>

*United States Marine Fleet Band Interview, 28 May 2010, Tucson, Arizona*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two overall questions that I want to cover. First, I want to know what your audition is like, and I want to know what are your basic musical and military responsibilities in your life as a Marine. Ok?

Active Duty Marine Tuba Player (MT): Ok.

PR: So when it comes to the audition, what was your first experience? What got you to join the Marines as opposed to joining another branch?

MT: Well, I listen to drum corps and they have the “Commandant’s Own” Drum Corps, so the idea of the Marine Corps was in my head. When I went to see recruiters, no one was ever in their offices except the Marines. I went in there and it turned out they were looking for extra tuba players in particular at the time. They were giving bonuses and all that, so I said, “I might as well go and audition.”

PR: It can’t hurt to do an audition.

MT: Exactly. Right. So, I did an audition with them.

PR: Did you find that the recruiters knew what they were talking about?

MT: For the most part, they knew what they were talking about and anything they didn’t know, they were quick to call the MTA<sup>293</sup> and get the correct answer.

PR: In my experiences some of the recruiters default to, “Oh, you’ll never get deployed. You don’t need to worry about that. You’re in the band. Bands don’t any of that.”

MT: Right. Well they actually knew all that. They did know the band gets deployed and all that. When I asked, “What are the duties when I get deployed?” They said, “Well, I don’t know, but let me call the MTA.”

PR: What types of things do you do when you get deployed?

MT: The band is security. We don’t even bring our instruments with us.

PR: Do you guys get deployed for full term like an infantry unit?

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<sup>292</sup> The interviews are presented chronologically.

<sup>293</sup> Stands for Musical Technical Assistant. See Appendix A for definition of MTA

MT: We'll be an augment to their platoon unit.

PR: So if they get deployed for 11 months there, you get deployed for 11 months there?

MT: Correct.

PR: Let's get back to the initial entry topic. After boot camp, you had to go to the school of music. What type of things did you have to do there? When I was in the army, both the Marines and Army were there together and we both had to do theory and aural skills. Did you have any specialized drill-type classes?

MT: The Marine Corps and Navy share a field drill. We drill a lot at boot camp, so it was a lot of them...helping the Navy get caught up because they don't do enough drill in boot camp. And since we do so much drill in boot camp, the biggest thing that field drill is, we are the medium for the advanced students<sup>294</sup> to practice with. So basically, they spin the mace and we just follow them. And, their job is to teach us, but really, we've already done drill. They're just teaching us for their education, so they can practice teaching.

PR: So, the marching the band does is the same as the marching you did at boot camp? The maneuvers were the same, counter-marches, turns, etc.?

MT: The slight differences are our turns and our counter-marches. That's one of the things the advance students teach the beginning students all those...

PR: It sounds like it's very similar to the Army and other branches. Let's return to the audition. When you did your audition, where did you have to go to? Did you go and do it at Parris Island<sup>295</sup> or a local recruiter? Did someone come and listen to you or did you have to go to a band?

MT: First, I did a phone audition.

PR: You played over the phone?

MT: It wasn't a real audition. It was just to give the guy an idea if he should go ahead and come down. He actually came right down to my high school.

PR: So you auditioned for the same guy, once over the phone and again in person?

MT: Right. See there's six MTAs, one for each zone in the US. So, he has to cover everybody who has to audition in that one zone.

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<sup>294</sup> Advanced students are those who return for advanced musical training as a part of getting promoted later in a musician's career.

<sup>295</sup> Marine Corps Base Parris Island is in South Carolina and is one of the two locations for boot camp. There is also a band located here.

PR: How is the audition scored? When I was in the Army they had a four-point system. You had to get a 2.3 in the audition and a 2.7 at the school of music.

MT: It's the same idea. I believe you said 2.7. I'm not positive about this one because I never heard my field score, but I believe it was a 2.7 on your field score, and that's what the MTA thinks you'll get or expect that you can get out of the school. So, they expect your incoming at the school to be a lot lower than that, but that's what they expect with the proper training and practice that you can get out of the school.

PR: Is there any perks to getting a lot better than a 2.7?

MT: Yes, if you get a 3.0 or higher, then you get to pick your duty station if there is a spot.

PR: Do you find that there is a lot of movement in the Marines?

MT: You basically have to have two years on post and two years [remaining] on your contract to go anywhere. So in your first enlistment, if you're not going to get out, then there's a chance of movement after two years. But if you're [not] staying in then your first band is your only band, unless you re-enlist, because you have two years at your duty station but only one year left on contract.

PR: How much say do you have on moving around from one band to the next?

MT: Your very first move, you get a lot of say. If it's your second enlistment, then it's preference. So if there are no slots, then there's no slots. You could have to sit and wait for a slot, but they will let you stay there in your band until a slot there is open. So, your first move is really the only time they give you preference.

PR: Eventually, I would imagine, the Marines get to the point where if they need you somewhere you have to go.

MT: Yeah. There are only so many Master Gunnery Sergeants, so if they need you somewhere, then you have to go there.

PR: What all did you have to play in the audition?

MT: They had me play a prepared piece...which I was lucky because we had just had solo and ensemble so I had one prepared already. I had to play through some scales, majors and all the minors, and then some sight-reading. Then he had me play the sight-reading again. I'm not sure, but as I understand it, it was to see if there was any improvement, to see if I'm teachable. That's what I understand. He had me work on some scales to see if I was teachable. It all worked out well, and I got invited to the school.

PR: The faster and cleaner the scale the better the score is?

MT: Yes. The faster, cleaner, and amount of octaves.

PR: I understand. How much say did you have in the music you played in the audition? You got to pick your own solo? No one was picking it for you?

MT: Oh, I could play whatever I wanted. I just did one. I could play excerpts, solos...

PR: You just did another audition?

MT: Well, we have to do an audition for every rank as well.

PR: So, in order to get promoted from E-4 to E-5,<sup>296</sup> you have to audition every time? Even when you get to higher ranks like Master Gunnery [Sergeant]?

MT: Yes, in order to get Staff [Sergeant], every rank has a score. There is a score you have to have to get the rank, and then in six months, there's a score you have to have to maintain the rank. So, I believe it's 2.75 to pick up corporal and then 2.8 to maintain corporal, and then 2.85 to pick up sergeant and 2.9 to maintain sergeant. Then it's 2.95 to pick up Staff [Sergeant], and it just goes on.

PR: So, is there a lot of emphasis on practicing your instrument for personal improvement as opposed to just getting good for your drill and stuff like that?

MT: It differs from band to band. Our band in particular, we spend almost an hour every morning working, as a band, on the technical and actually becoming better individual players. Some bands would prefer the band to sound good, and they don't care how we do individually. It depends on that commander and what the Marine Corps [needs] that band to do. All the bands out there have different tasks.

PR: Besides playing, what else do you have to do when you join the Marines? You have to take a physical, I'm assuming, and you have to take the ASVAB test.<sup>297</sup> Then you sit down with someone at the MEPS station<sup>298</sup> and decide what training station you are going to go to. Does everyone have to do basic training? What about the advanced training?

MT: Yes.

PR: Can you speed through advance training?

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<sup>296</sup> See Appendix A for a complete list of the ranks and ratings for all the military branches,

<sup>297</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of ASVAB

<sup>298</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of MEPS

MT: At the basic course, if you blow a 3.0, then you can advance out of the course early.

PR: You only get one shot at it though? Or is it that you can play it at your initial playing if you get a 3.0 then you're on the fast track?

MT: It depends. The Marine Corps likes to use the school. It's hard to advance out if you're a Marine because they also like to use the school as a segue between boot camp and as conditioning to get you ready for your band. So, if you go straight from boot camp, then you're in the boot camp mindset in your band, and you're not going to do so good. So, they like to keep you there at least until you're F1 around three months.<sup>299</sup> So, they'll keep you a while just to see how you do and make sure you're on track. And then they'll let you advance out.

PR: At [boot camp], was there any time to play your tuba?

MT: We don't. I've heard of Marines getting to have their mouthpiece to buzz on. I've heard of recruits having a horn somehow. I don't know how that happens. But I do know for a fact that some drill instructors let their recruits buzz on mouthpieces.

PR: How did that affect you when you picked up a horn afterwards at the school of music?

MT: It felt like I was blowing into nothing. I couldn't get my lips to move. It felt like I was blowing through a hose. I was able to eventually pick it up, but it was actually pretty discouraging when I first got to the school. I thought I was decent and then when I got out of boot camp I couldn't play a note on the stupid horn. You pick it back up pretty quickly. Everyone does, but...

PR: So, do you think you are back to where you were before?

MT: Before boot camp? I think I'm well above where I was then.

PR: Let's move into your responsibilities as a bandsman. How many ensembles does your band have that require a tuba player?

MT: We have our ceremonial band, concert band, brass quintet, our brass band, which is like a New Orleans style, and that's about it for tubas.

PR: How many of those do you get the opportunity to play in?

MT: I get to play in the ceremonial band. I'd like to play in the concert band, but I have a secondary instrument. So if I could I would, but in concert band I play bassoon instead.

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<sup>299</sup> F1 refers to a midway checkpoint of the training and is out of a total of six months possible for advance training

PR: The bassoon is needed more?

MT: Exactly. Well, our band doesn't rate one from PAC 20,<sup>300</sup> which is at the Pentagon.

PR: They decide what band gets what instruments?

MT: Right. We don't rate one from them, so they need one, and I played bassoon when I got there. Usually, I would have to play in ceremonial band and concert band and then they pick some of the better tuba players to [play in the other groups]. Like, our Staff Sergeant and I are at the same playing level, but he's better at the brass band and I'm better at the brass quintet, so it's pretty fair.

PR: Do you find that it's good to advertise that you are capable of playing other instruments or in retrospect would you have kept it hidden?

MT: Well, I didn't even advertise it. I would have never told anybody about it. We were just talking and having a conversation, and I said, "Yeah, back in sixth grade, I played bassoon." Done. That's all I said. Then six months later they came up to me and said, "Hey, you're gonna play bassoon on the Kentucky tour." I said, "What?" I hadn't played bassoon in seven years.

PR: So, your commander had a meeting and they needed a bassoon for something...

MT: Yeah, and someone said, "You know what, I heard him talking to [someone] and he said..." So yeah, in retrospect I wish I could...I like bassoon, but they over-use me on bassoon. I play more bassoon now than tuba.

PR: If you had to put a ratio on the amount of time...Do most of the gigs come out of the ceremonial band, or do most of the gigs come out of the brass quintet and stuff like that?

MT: Again, see that depends on where you're at. Like I said, there are six districts. For instance, we have to play all the graduations, but we're also expected to help in the recruiting area. All bands have their recruiting area. Our brass quintet is really good, so they send our brass quintet to other recruiting areas outside of [our] district, whereas [a different] band might do all ceremonial. So, it depends on the needs of the group and where you are. We have a very good brass band, probably the best of the field bands, I think, so they send us...They just sent us to Wisconsin. They send us all over the U.S., where there are bands that are closer, but it just depends on what each band offers.

PR: It seems as if you're in one band that offers a lot of ceremonies and that's not what you want to do, then if you're patient and just wait, you may find yourself in a band that

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<sup>300</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of PAC 20.

does a lot of public relations-type of gigs and going on tour playing “America the Beautiful” continually.

MT: Right. It depends on the band. There are some bands like Lejeune<sup>301</sup> or Pendleton,<sup>302</sup> they just stay on base. All they do is change of command, and ceremonial type stuff.

PR: Especially at a place with [boot camp] graduations like Parris Island?

MT: Exactly. [Though that band] is not just responsible for Parris Island. A lot of people don’t know, but there’s a base ten miles north of [Parris Island], Marine Corps Air Station. [They] do the change of commands and post reliefs for the island and the air station. Luckily, there is not that many. The emphasis is still probably on concert band, but they do a lot of ceremonies still. But at Quantico,<sup>303</sup> their ceremonial band, they’re so good. They’re really good. But that’s because they do more of that. [Our] concert band... We’re one of the better concert bands.

PR: Do you find that they change commands a lot for the bands? If one band’s commander is good at a certain area and that band changes commanders to one that isn’t good in that area, how does that affect the band and its responsibilities?

MT: It does. For instance, our commander just came in a couple of years ago, and our emphasis changed from field band to concert band. It all depends on the commander.

PR: Beyond the musician side of things, do you have military, administrative-type responsibilities?

MT: Depending on your rank, your seniority in the band, you have different areas. For example, our band has a music library. People are in charge of that. Then there are the liaisons between our band and the battalion. And then there is our administrative office. We have our operations office, public affairs, training, supply, repair [technician].

PR: And there are sub-areas within, say, supply?

MT: There are like three or four people that work in supply, and each one does a certain area.

PR: So, in other words, there are some jobs that directly impact the musical part of the band, but there are other jobs that are part of the military side of being a musician in the military?

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<sup>301</sup> Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

<sup>302</sup> Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California.

<sup>303</sup> Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

MT: Right, and in order for us to function with the rest of our battalion, we have certain requirements that we have to fulfill.

PR: Do you find yourself, let's say you get up in the morning you do PT. After PT, you have morning formation. You then go to shops. Do you then go right to shops? Or if you have a Change of Command ceremony, you go and do that ceremony?

MT: The day before, they give us our full plan of the next day. And so, if we have PT, we'll come in early. We'll do our PT, and then they'll give us a recovery time.

PR: How much PT do you do?

MT: We're required 30 minutes a day. We usually split that up and do three blocks a week. So, within those three blocks we get our 30 minutes a day in. That's required by the commandant to do.

PR: So, they only give you a one-day notice? Is there a minimum requirement that they have to give you on the responsibilities that you have coming up, or do you find your band changing things on you and then you have to do something completely different?

MT: The plan is just like a guideline as to how the day should go. If it turns out PT runs a little long, then maybe they chop some time off of a rehearsal. And then we play gigs, like this one gig we played, it came up out of nowhere. No one knew we were going. They were like, "Ok, we're hopping on a C-130 tomorrow." But we got to spend some time there, so it usually works out.

PR: Getting back to the shops, do you find, as a tuba player that you get shoved around [and sent to do military training and shop related work] a lot [more than others]?

MT: Not just as a tuba player. Anyone can. I am in a chamber group, and I just got sent away from the band to do my pistol [qualification]. The rest of the band hasn't done it yet. But even those who aren't used [in chamber groups] are trained in extra areas.

PR: Do they just have someone fill in for you while you're away.

MT: That's correct. I actually have a gig on Saturday, and I have someone filling in for me. Obviously, we don't like when that happens because, with a quintet, it's really easy to mess up the vibe you have going on. But the way they look at it, if the best players are playing in the ensembles, there's no point in sending the ones that are going to blow it off anyways. What's the point in sending the guys that don't practice their horn to the pistol range? Whereas I want to go to the pistol range, why give them the perk if they don't practice their horn?

PR: Do you have to qualify on your rifle?



MT: The rifle is annually, and the pistol is not required to [qualify] on depending on your MOS.<sup>304</sup> We're not required, but we're a security force so we do anyways.

PR: About how many tours do you do? I know it's different from band to band, but if you could kind of average it, about how many tours do you go on for like a week or so?

MT: It's probably two or three, and they're like three or four days long.

PR: And you pretty much stay within your region?

MT: Right. We'll stay within our recruiting district, but we'll move around instead of staying in our base.

PR: Do you have any music specific to your branch? Is there any music that a person would hear at a Marine ceremony that they wouldn't hear in a different branch's ceremony...things that might be useful to look at before joining the Marines?

MT: We have *Semper Fidelis* and *The Marines Hymn*. But our pregame is whatever three songs our Gunny wants to pick. We march out. We play the *Star Spangled Banner* and with our pass and review, we play whatever three songs our drum major wants to play. Other than that, for change of command and post exchanges, we play *Semper Fi* at the end.

PR: I know in the Army sometimes a unit will have songs specific to that unit's historic traditions? Do the Marines have any of that?

MT: Yeah, like our band, we play *Waltzing Matilda*.

PR: What are some of the advantages to having a Marine band job as opposed to a civilian job?

MT: The best part is, opposed to being a freelance tuba player, I know that every day I have a job. On top of that, I have my free medical, free dental, and stuff like that.

PR: I'm not sure if this is possible, but could you name two things that you like about the Marines and two things that you think that the Marines could do better, than the other branches?

MT: The things I like...I like being a Marine. They just seem to have a higher image. People just really look up to Marines. Everyone knows the uniform. Just having the name Marine, the title, that's probably my favorite part. The next best part is when we deploy,

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<sup>304</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of MOS.

we don't play our instruments. We play Marine. We actually carry our firearms. We are Marines. It's almost like band is our secondary MOS.

PR: So it's like fifty-fifty when you're not deployed.

MT: It's about fifty-fifty when we're not deployed because we still do all the security force training. But unless something goes down on base, they aren't going to use us, because we're not deployable right now. My unit's not. I'm not sure what I would change. Things I like better than other branches, I know I watch the Army do field drill, and they can't touch the Marines field drill, not at all. I actually like the field drill. It's more snap and pop. Some of the little differences...I just like a lot better. The Navy's field drill is identical. The actual manual is the same. The only difference is the sound off routine. I have never really seen the Air Force do field drill. But [for the Marines] you really got to like to march. It's not like high school marching at all. You're playing on a professional horn. You're playing with professionals. The "President's Own" marches too. There's nothing wrong with marching at all. Like I said, we look really good at it. I love parades. People in wheelchairs will be getting up and clapping for us. I mean, it's just awesome.

PR: Do you get to interact with the crowds in parades and things like that?

MT: Absolutely not. In parades, we're doing a show. If we do a concert, they always give us time to go out into the crowd and meet everybody. They can ask questions, and we can ask about the town and all that stuff. Yeah, they always give us time with a concert to meet and greet. Now if the parade is halted for any reason, then they'll let us talk to people on the sides, but when we're actually marching, then no.

PR: So depending on whom you are, that could be a good thing or a bad thing. If you're not into marching, then that would obviously be a negative. If you don't like the idea of being deployed and not even taking your instrument, then that might be a negative, but if you like that, then it's obviously a positive.

MT: Right, exactly.

PR: I think that's about it. Is there anything you think we missed that you might want to add for someone who hasn't learned about the Marine band and you think they should know?

MT: I think it's probably pretty cool that we have a rock band, our show band, and we have a big band. We don't just do the ceremonial thing. We have our Fourth of July concert, but not even just Fourth of July, we have concerts all the time. We have our

show band, and it's a rock band, and we have a sound studio that provides a lot of support for them.

PR: So, if somebody wants to lay down some tracks, you have the ability to do that?

MT: Oh yeah. There's the musician of the year for the Marine Corps, and we have people in the band come in and lay down tracks, and we send it up to headquarters. Yeah, anyone at all can. We have a couple musicians that just like to hear themselves play. You know, it's important to hear yourself play. And they can come in and it's no problem recording them and giving them a CD so they can hear what they sound like. And sometimes they'll do a recording minus one part. A piano player might come in and record something without the melody. Then he can play that in his headphones while adding something to it. It definitely comes in handy. And the coolest thing is that it's top of the line gear, stuff I couldn't afford if I was doing it out in the civilian world.

PR: Do you play on your own horn?

MT: I play on both.

PR: When you get out, do you get to keep the instrument?

MT: No, I have to leave it.

PR: Do the Marines replace the instruments on a regular basis, or do you play on an old horn that they haven't gotten around to replacing?

MT: It depends on the quality of the horn. If the old horn is in tiptop shape, then there's no reason to replace it. The horns we play on right now are kind of old, but they play great so there's no need to get a new one. On the other hand, the trumpets had terrible horns, so they just got a new line. Matter of fact, recently the shop just bought me a new quintet horn that cost the shop somewhere around ten grand. So, I'm just glad I don't have to buy it.

PR: That right there might be the best part about being in the military. It's not your horn, it's the military's, but you can play on it. And you probably get some say on what they buy?

MT: Once you get a little higher up in the rankings you get a little more say, but I don't mind, because like I said, the horns they give you are still top of the line horns.

PR: Well, I think that covers it. Thanks for the help, and good luck with your career.

*Army Regional Band Tuba Player Interview, 29 May 2010, Tucson, Arizona.*<sup>305</sup>

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two overall questions that I want you to answer in this interview. I want to know the differences in the audition processes of each of the active duty bands and premiere bands and I want to know what are your basic musical and military responsibilities in your life since basic training. Ok?

Army Tuba Player (AT): Ok.

PR: Now me being prior service, I think I might know some of the answers to my questions. So, this interview might be abbreviated compared to what I might ask if I was interviewing someone in the Air Force but I'm afraid I might get too abbreviated, so feel free to add things that I might miss because I might not ask the right question thinking that I know what's going on. So, I am going to kind of breeze through some of this because I'd imagine that the audition process is almost identical to what it was when we were going through.

AT: It just changed three weeks ago.

PR How'd it change?

AT: It used to be a brass woodwind audition and then a rhythm audition. Well every instrument has their own audition now. It all breaks down the same way though. You're going to play something and I'm going to give you sight-reading. But we're asking three pieces now.

PR: You have to play three solos?

AT: You have to play three excerpts...not necessarily the full solo but play three pieces that can show what you can do.

PR: Contrasting style?

AT: Yeah. Now it can get down to where a saxophone player will play me one of the standard solos, then they play me a jazz piece like maybe a Charlie Parker song, and then play me maybe a funk tune or something. It's not just a classical thing. What really changed is the scoring system. [It] is now on a 40 point scale instead of the strict 4 point scale and it's actually attainable to get a forty. You can get 36 off of the audition, sight-reading and whatever. There's four points that are bonus points. Every instrument is different. Every instrument has vocals in it. For flute or trumpet or anything [to serve] as backup vocals [and] to be able to sing and be in the rock band. So, you can get one to two points in all these categories. One point is you can do a little bit and two points is you're

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<sup>305</sup> This tuba player was serving as a regional auditioner at the time of this interview.

mission capable. To get a forty, you have to be able to do two other things. Vocals are one of them. For tuba, it's improvisation. Again one or two [points]. I would say two is like these guys are getting down. That's a two and a one would be being able to get through a solo. So, that's what I would imagine, and I'm the one that has to audition people. For trumpet, piccolo trumpet's on there, [as well as] lead chops. Because if you got those screaming there's no way to...it's not on the Haydn Concerto, but that's something we can use. Lead chops, being a screamer, piccolo trumpet, and improvisation [is on the list]. On tuba audition, brass band music's on there now because that's what's in now.

PR: Oh. So, you have to be able to play brass band and stuff like that?

AT: Yeah, you have to be able to play the Youngblood [Brass Band] and all that stuff now. If you can get through... I've done it where I can put a piece of music... [in front of the auditionee and say to them] "play this piece of music," and they just can't keep time. That means they are sucking. So for tuba, I guess [to attain] a forty [an auditionee] would be able to get down with it and change with the rhythms and all that. So the brass band...that's what's in... [like] the Jon Sass stuff.

PR: Does sight-reading have that incorporated into it now?

AT: Yeah. For sight-reading you got from fifteen minutes to two hours to prepare. So if I drive out to hear an audition, I'm going to say "here's the music. By the time I get there, we're going to be sight-reading." It's a lot of music.

PR: So, you send the music ahead of time? And you have a whole big pack of sight-reading?

AT: Yeah, whatever we want. The rhythm stuff is like that now. We give them the day and the night before and say "here's around ten or fifteen songs."

PR: Is there concern that people will get this packet well in advance and prepare and start working on it two or three months in advance, so that there's nothing that's really sight-reading?

AT: It could happen but someone would have to give up that information.

PR: That's what I mean. Someone who's already done the audition and has the packet says, "Here's what they are going to ask you." They start working on it. Then six months later they call up and say, I want to do an audition.

AT: It is but we are going to get them. We are going to know. But that's kind of part of it. In the Army bands, somebody could have it for two months.

PR: I would imagine, because of that, the sight-reading would have to be a little harder than a typical sight-reading because you want to be able to pull something out that they could know but worked hard on.

AT: No, we asked the instructors and they said, “No.” Just don’t get wrapped up on this. It’s all about how well can you play it?

PR: It just seems like with all the emphasis in other areas, that there might be more emphasis on sight-reading because they want people to be able to play things that they haven’t seen with as little notice as possible.

AT: Well...we run into that a lot...the worst scenario. We have a liaison that does that. We probably won’t run into that. The fact that I’m going to audition somebody from Ithaca or whatever that’s going to happen to know that there is somebody who is going to take the audition in Boston on the same instrument, on the same music, and they’re going to send the music? The probability is that it’s not likely going to happen.

PR: You still have the MACOM Bands?<sup>306</sup> Do you still have the Charlie One auditions?<sup>307</sup>

AT: Charlie One’s still there. That’s thirty points.

PR: Ok, so, it’s the same only now you can actually get to forty points. Is that forty broke down a certain way? So, like ten points for scales or something.

AT: Yeah, well scales are out but it’s a rubric. I’ll send one of them off to you.<sup>308</sup>

PR: That would be great.

AT: It is really defined. It’s not just tone and rhythm. The list is long and it has a one through six. It breaks down a lot.

PR: It’s probably a lot of work for you but it makes it easier as far as scoring, breaking it down so much.

AT: And they’re already fielding it now. We haven’t given too many auditions on the new score sheet their giving it to the people we’ve hired. People are actually scoring higher on the new sheet. It’s more well-rounded. It changes it from taking a saxophone player from Eastman that is classically trained [and] a guy that maybe has got his bachelor’s from a regular school but can really get down on improvisation. [The second guy] might score higher than the Eastman graduate because he can probably play a decent

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<sup>306</sup> See Appendix A for definition of MACOM Bands.

<sup>307</sup> See Appendix A for definition of Charlie One audition.

<sup>308</sup> See Appendix A for audition rubric.

solo too but he has the improvisation skills and maybe can sing because he's been playing in bars or whatever. He's going to score higher than possibly the Eastman grad. Then you get into the Army bands and that guy is probably more useful than the other guy. The concept is all there. It could change a little bit but it's a little bit more defined. Now the vocals are the big thing. We want to see vocals...extra points...piccolo trumpet. If someone can do something extra, we want to reward them for that. And that's getting away for the whole Army idea of, "Why should I play picc.? Why should I sing if I'm not going to be [asked to do that later]?"

PR: If you could play an instrument that isn't vocals, would that help you or is it only matter that you can sing and play improvisation? So, it doesn't matter if you can play trumpet at say, an Eastman level? Or is it that it might not show up in your score, but it's useful in your job?

AT: If I was to show off my doubling, if I want to play trumpet, I do that. I do that in the Army band. I play marches. So, am I mission capable? Can I blast away on marches? I would think if I did that, I would get a max score on doubling because I'm mission capable on that. Can I improv? No. We're not looking someone to fill a trumpet slot. We're looking for someone that's useful on their double. It's a pretty good system.

PR: I just wondered because I knew it happened a lot in areas like woodwinds. I knew oboe players that found themselves playing flute or clarinet. And you're kind of required to be able to do that, and I just wondered if that translated well into audition standards.

AT: And that's why it's there now.

PR: What's the minimum you need to get into the school<sup>309</sup> now?

AT: On the new scale, it's an eighteen and it's all re-vamped.<sup>310</sup> Like for the Charlie One audition, should it be a 36? Because with the way it's going now, everyone has it. They accelerated 38 people at one time. They were only there for a month at the school. That's where it's going. All the people joining now are 3.0 and above so it's like what's a 3.0 now if everyone has it? Probably half the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Band<sup>311</sup> is Charlie One.

PR: Has that hurt the MACOM Band quality?

AT: Nah. If anything, I'd say they've gotten even better now. Because that's still the place to be, so now the really good players are trying to get in. There's even a bigger cut of musicians. Just like any other time so those players are stinking awesome now. And

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<sup>309</sup> See Appendix A for a definition of school which is a shortening of Armed Forces School of Music.

<sup>310</sup> Eighteen out of forty. The minimum used to be a 2.3 on a scale of 4.

<sup>311</sup> This is short for the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division Band that is stationed at Fort Drum, NY.

that's the one thing. If we get the runner up of the TUSAP<sup>312</sup> auditions, they want that MACOM spot. So, no. Every band's quality took a little step up.

PR: With everyone accelerating out of the school, is there any talk of changing it up at all?

AT: Ten week courses start in October.

PR: So, it's no longer six months anymore?

AT: No. We tried to [get] the Marines and the Navy [to change with us also]. They can't do it.... The Navy just got rid of their doubling requirement. I tell people that. That's where it's going. I say, "The Navy just got rid of their doubling requirement and now we're asking you to play piccolo trumpet." So, that's the proof. We went to a ten week course and they're still on six months. That's a fact of what kind of musicians are coming into what program. That's what I said. The Navy ditched their doubling requirement. Why's that? When the standards go down a little bit, you need more people. Ours is through the roof right now. I give that fact to people who want to bash the service and come up and say they are better. In who's eyes? Almost in my opinion the Marines are even better. They're sharp as hell. I love looking... When the Marines are there, they have a presence to them. I think, wow that's awesome. So, I'll never talk bad but I'll say, "Here are the facts."

PR: It seems as if every branch has something for someone and it's which one is more suitable for you. With Marines, if you want to walk tall and look good. The emphasis is on image. They sound good too but if you join them you want the presence. That's more important than the music. You want the title, Marine.

AT: In recruiting, they say we can't beat the Marines. The Marine's hire Marines. They hire people that look.... We have to use money. And that's just the nature of it. So, that's how the scoring system has changed.

PR: Is everything else still the same? You still have to go to MEPS<sup>313</sup> and take an ASVAB test<sup>314</sup> and a physical. And the scoring is the same [for the ASVAB]?

AT: And we want them to do the ASVAB and physical before they do the audition.

PR: So, that you don't have to travel all over the place for no reason?

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<sup>312</sup> The United States Army "Pershing's Own" Band

<sup>313</sup> Military Entrance Processing Station

<sup>314</sup> Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery



AT: I had a guy who was disqualified for having an outie belly button. I mean who's to know that. You're in perfect health. You're on the track team.

PR: How does that affect his ability to shoot a rifle or carry a sousaphone?

AT: Yeah. Well he could have a possible hernia. I've seen so many things. I tell them that same story; a guy is severely allergic to bee stings. So I tell them, "You're going to have to get the physical anyways." And I tell them, "if you're already wavering on why [or] I want to feel it out. Then maybe this isn't what you want." And they're shocked. "Well you're supposed to be wining and dining me." [I say] "Well maybe this is not for you." I'm not too afraid to say that [to potential recruits]. And that's where we're at now. Maybe back in the day, maybe we had to do that. Whatever is going to get you to me. I started the gig off like that. Well let me baby you a little bit. I got burned by it. Where I've gone out and you better at least be qualified to join the military.

PR: Less traveling, I bet.

AT: Yeah, I cut my budget by literally ten times the amount.

PR: So, you would say first contact a recruiter. The recruiter will set up your MEPS station visit. And then once you get back, then you can do an audition.

AT: Yeah.

PR: Do you do phone auditions at all?

AT: We did Skype auditions. And that was cool, it worked, and it was good, but now that a lot of the stuff has changed, where it's in the score now. Like with trombone there's only one spot, we can't do that, too many variables where somebody's not going to get a job. If you took a virtual audition and it sounded bad and some guy was face to face and did the best performance in his house or in his studio...

PR: I could see someone, for example, doing an unofficial phone audition so that if I pass the physical I know I'm good.

AT: We do that though. They gave us computers to do that.... I get a lot of young people on the phone who say they're classical trained piano player. And I say, "Can you play jazz or can you play pop?" And they say "What do you mean?" I say, "Can you play chord changes?" They always say "Yeah." But I know they can't. By the book I have to go hear them but I know they're not going to get one of the spots. Even the older guys, "Oh yeah, I can do that." Then I get out there and they suck.

PR: You should ask them to play some *St. Thomas* on the spot.

AT: Well, we ask for a resume now. That's part of it. It's on our e-mail. I need your resume. I at least need to see it. That's another red flag. "I don't have a resume." Or "I never built a resume." Why not? That means [you've never] done a gig. So, we get into it now. We get in deep now with the recruiters. That's all on you, man. This job before I think it's fair to say was easy. It was a vacation. It changed to something that is really effective. It's for the best for the band. I actually recruited enough people two months ago but here I am, you know, sitting here.

PR: So, you have a quota of people you're supposed to get in?

AT: Yeah, we have a quota.

PR: I would imagine that's just about the same for every recruiter and auditioner of all the different military branches.

AT: Yeah, there's a quota. So, the old school was, you fill your quota, and then you're done. Stay home. I was told if you're in your office, you're wrong. It's actually the opposite. If I'm not on the road, I should be there working, calling, putting a good face on the Army. That was not the case in this job. And I'd say our bands suffered because of that for the longest time.

PR: When I was at Benning<sup>315</sup> for basic training, there was a guy there that was a violist who had won a position in the Army Stings and he was allowed to practice a little on Sundays while he was there and [I always wished that I could have practiced even an hour a week like him]. Then I got out of basic training and I was like, "What is this metal thing I'm holding in my hands and what do I do with it?" Is that still the case?

AT: Yeah, you can't practice. I've even heard recent stories where they even took away their mouthpiece. But I asked them, "Honestly, would you have played if you could have?" And they were like, "No."

PR: See I would have played on Sunday or something.

AT: I would have played too but they were like, "Nah." And like I said people are accelerating out now and I always tell them everyone goes through it. Just get some chops in the bag a couple months before and you'll be fine. Everyone has before you.

PR: Have they added anything new to the initial process since we joined.

AT: Band-wise, no. Basic is different.

PR: How's it different? It's no longer a three phase eight or nine week course?

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<sup>315</sup> Fort Benning, Georgia.

AT: It still is eight weeks just the basics have changed. The best way to say it is when we went through it was digging fox-holes and waiting for the Russians to attack. Now they're clearing rooms and hand to hand combat. And it's bleeding over. Basic training and AIT are more combined. So, at the school they are doing warrior drills and other tasks like that.

PR: Did they get rid of the different classes you could get into while you are at the school.

AT: Kind of. It's all self paced now. Theory is computerized....

PR: I didn't like the way theory was taught. Actually I didn't like aural skills there either but I thought theory could have been done better. Aural skills are what really bothered me. I remember thinking that singing numbers<sup>316</sup> was just a bad idea.

AT: Well they got them out. They got rid of it. They finally got smart.

PR: It just didn't work. I'm not sure it taught anything to anyone.

AT: I didn't learn anything. I came in at 17 and I didn't learn anything.

PR: Anyways, I think that pretty much covers the basic introduction process. As far as when you get to the band, are tuba player's MOSs still 02F?<sup>317</sup>

AT: No, Everyone is 42R.

PR: As far as the actual band though, everything is restructured as I understand it. There's a lot less emphasis on concert band and more on chamber groups?

AT: That's it. They are called musical performance teams or MPTs and there's a structure so that MPT Alpha is the big concert ceremonial group. MPT Bravo is the brass quintet. So, it's in every group. "You're in MPT Bravo? That's the rock band." And so when people ask me about warrant officer, it's like, you're not this grand conductor anymore. You're an administrator. You're still going to conduct but you're going to run groups and you've got to be smart and administrative.

PR: So, your primary conducting as a warrant officer is going to be in the ceremonies and it's kind of going to be for show in between background music?

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<sup>316</sup> The previous system incorporated numbers instead of solfege for sight-singing. So instead of "do, re, mi" the musician would sing "one, two, three." There was no change number-wise when a chromatic alteration occurred. Musicians simply sang the same number with the altered pitch.

<sup>317</sup> In the army each job gets an abbreviation called their MOS or Military Occupational Specialty. Tuba players used to be 02F but recent changes have combined all the musicians to one abbreviation which is 42R

AT: Yeah, and also the big concerts like when we go on the big concert tours. But I mean, don't join to be a conductor. That's not it. And they don't want that either. They want someone that can keep the higher command off our back. They want a politician that can wheel and deal.

PR: So, if you're in say MPT Bravo in one band and you transfer to another band, are you still in MPT Bravo?

AT: It's up to what they put you in. But the idea is that every band is structured like that so that if they wanted to deploy, they can deploy just half the band. Like Fort Hood,<sup>318</sup> they can just deploy MPT Alpha, Charlie, and whatever so maybe the rock band and the ceremonial band. So, there is still a band there and a reserve band just takes their particular MPT and plugs it in and they play. So, there's still a band. There's a band here and there's a band there.

PR: Do you still get deployed for like eleven months?

AT: It still seems to be a year. The 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division is starting the six month thing. They're going to try it and see if it works.

PR: It seems to me, when I got deployed I was fortunate. I was in the brass quintet. I did a lot of gigs with the brass quintet but there were a lot of people in the band that were clarinetists that found themselves chaperoning Iraqis and stuff.

AT: It's changed for the better. They're getting more employed.

PR: It sounds as if there is not as much emphasis on the military side. Do you still do a lot of field exercises?

AT: No. That's out.

PR: Oh, because I got sent continually, especially when I was at Fort Hood. I would sometimes feel expendable because I was continually being sent to do this class or sent to learn how to run this NBC detector.<sup>319</sup>

AT: That's still a hard part.

PR: Because, if you're not in the brass quintet or the Dixieland band and there is no ceremony, then you're expendable. They don't need you. Go work in a shop or go train to use the SAW.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Fort Hood, Texas

<sup>319</sup> NBC stands for Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical.

AT: That's still a fight. It's still there because we have to have one person to do this and one to do that. It's still hard but I would say it's more music from back in the day. It's gotten a lot better. And that's because the way we structure it. Everyone is employed now, the way we structured it. So, we only have enough clarinets or flutes to fill the team you're supposed to be in.

PR: So, how many tuba players does a band normally have now?

AT: Three.

PR: So, that hasn't changed at least. It's still the same number as it was before. So, if you're now in the teams, will they make more than one brass quintet?

AT: In the big bands. There is Army Band small, Army Band medium, and Army Band large. A MACOM band is now called Army Band medium. San Antonio is now an Army Band medium. So, they have two brass quintets, two rock bands.

PR: But San Antonio isn't a MACOM band?

AT: No. That's something we're trying to get away from. Fort Lewis<sup>321</sup> is going to be an Army Band medium. I think Fort Hood is going to be an Army Band medium. So, they can have two brass quintets. They're at like sixty-something people now. It's changed. So, they can have a second brass quintet. They get the extra tuba player. With the three tuba players in the band, one's a ceremonial band, one's in brass quintet, and one's in Dixie.

PR: So, the ceremonial band would only have one tuba player in it?

AT: That's what it's kind of breaking down to.

PR: So, the whole band doesn't come together for ceremonial band.

AT: No. I would say it's still going back and forth. If there's a change of command, I'm sure the whole band's going to be out there still. But it's working where the ceremonial band's smaller where you don't need two tuba players. You just need a decent tuba player. So, if there's some guy that's pretty loud, put him in the ceremonial band. The guy with the classical chops put him...you know. We're still going to place him. And the Dixie band won't gig as much so you put him.... Or the guy who wants to run Ops, put him in the Dixie band because he's not going to perform as much but he's still in that

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<sup>320</sup> SAW stands for Squad Automatic Weapon. Otherwise known as a machine gun and each band in the army has a few people who are qualified to use that weapon.

<sup>321</sup> Fort Lewis, Washington.

group. It's a good structure. Instead of, "Well do you have a Dixie band here? No. Well, ok."

PR: So, where are the large bands at?

AT: The large bands are the special bands. The premiere bands.

PR: So, you have the small bands at....

AT: Fort Riley,<sup>322</sup> Fort Bliss,<sup>323</sup> Fort Huachuca.<sup>324</sup>

PR: The kind of smaller posts?

AT: Yeah.

PR: Wow, things have changed a lot. I'm imagining that the day to day performance requirement of the band have pretty much stayed the same as it was before.

AT: Yeah, and that's what I tell people these days. There's two blocks of time, you know, rehearsals or shop. It's broken into two a day.

PR: Especially in the summer with change of command season. So, that has pretty much stayed the same. Do you guys do anymore public relations? I know when I was in, we did like one tour a year. You know, take a trip to rural Texas and play in some community. Depending on the band, that was about it for our public relations.

AT: We still have the band tour but with this small group break down there's a lot more just sending people out.

PR: So, they'll send a brass quintet out to do a two day trip to somewhere.

AT: A lot more. There's a lot more of that. So, there's a lot more money since we're not taking the big band anymore to send a bunch of groups out. That's how the squads are now.<sup>325</sup> So, the brass quintet, these are your squad members, your squad leader. They're making the groups tight. They're tight so you're responsible; you're invested in the person. So, your group's success is invested on everything. If they're failing a PT test it goes right into the music because if those guys are doing remedials, then you're not going

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<sup>322</sup> Fort Riley, Kansas.

<sup>323</sup> Fort Bliss, Texas/New Mexico.

<sup>324</sup> Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

<sup>325</sup> This is a reference to the smallest level of military organizing structure that the Army uses. It is usually about 4-8 members in size. It goes squad, then platoon, then company, then battalion, then brigade, then corps, then army. Each larger group is divided into smaller groups. So a company might have two, four, or eight platoons in it and a platoon might have four squads in it.

to be practicing or whatever so everyone has to pull together. It's tight now with this structure.

PR: With this structure, you're able to play more? With the brass quintet, I played arrangements that were basically background music. It was never intended to be what is considered high quality thoughtful music. But if you're doing a public relations tour somewhere, you might pull off something that has a little more musicality to it.

AT: Yeah, and it's just performance now. And the group, now that you [are] just really tight together because you're in your squad and everything, there's more practice time. There's more of a show now.

PR: So, there is more of a trend to something that the public is going to be interested in?

AT: Yeah, these guys now are coming in with ideas, young guys. It's good. I mean people are...on it. I mean, when the Boston Brass, they don't just sit there and play. Guys that are better players; they're seeing that. We don't just sit down and play. That's going to sell it. And these guys know it...not the people in the Army bands. They are like "We have to sit down in our thing and play..." Well now they are hiring better players. Nah, this is how it works. This is exciting. Those ideas are coming in now. Instead of just sitting down and playing.

PR: You still have the same semi-annual fitness test. All that stuff has pretty much stayed the same. Field exercise, weapons qualification once a year?

AT: Yeah.

PR: Do you find in this new structure that you spend more time away from home?

AT: Yeah, the way the bands are setup, no one's going to tell you where you have to go and represent the band field. You got to set that up. People call us all the time. "Hey, I got this group." They've got to market themselves. So, if they don't want to go out on tour then they're not going to market themselves in the surrounding area...and it's on them now. It's on your support team, your musical performance team to go out and do that. So, if you wanted to and the groups are cool with it, you're going to start contacting, for example, Hawaii and say, "Can you employ your own funds?"

PR: Say to them, "Can I come and play over there?"

AT: And that's up to you. If they leave, if they do all the stuff on their own together, they just leave the band. So, the band still runs because there not like, "Well, I'm in the brass quintet and I'm the squad leader of second platoon so they need me." So, you're all together.

PR: So, it's important to if you're lucky, to have a squad leader that wants to do that stuff.

AT: Yeah and that's the hard part of the military.

PR: You never know who you're going to get.

AT: Yeah, that's the problem.

PR: Do the small bands do all that too. I mean the smaller bands must only have two tubas.

AT: No, they usually have three.

PR: I just figured if they're smaller than they don't have as many chamber groups and don't need as many tuba players.

AT: Yeah, they do. The medium bands and above are the only ones that have double reeds. So, the small ones are not authorized any double reeds.

PR: So, if you're a double reed player, you'll never go to those bands.

AT: Right, which is kind of cool if you're a double reed because you can only go to San Antonio, the MACOMs, and Fort Lewis. That's the only places there be able to go. There not authorized to go anywhere else.

PR: The double reeds spots were always hard to fill anyhow.

AT: Well that's why they traded those spots for another guitar and another bass...or another keyboard. I think they took a euphonium spot away too.

PR: The small ones almost become more rock and stuff like that.

AT: Kind of. That's a touchy subject to a lot of people. What's popular...who's turning on the radio isn't classical music... [tuba players] are not what the public is listening to on the radio. They're listening to Lady Gaga...then we have to do it. And that requires some good singers but...

PR: Especially with the military. With the military, these long-term guys and first year Privates that are probably sitting at the home and eating breakfast and they want to hear music that's...

AT: They want to hear "Sweet Home Alabama." So, we need more guitar and bass to do that and people are upset about that. They think, "Well, I'm a tuba player. Does that mean I'm not useful in the band?" Now that's just a loaded question. I think the brass quintet is



still the most important group in the band. So, when people say, “We’re going to take away classical instruments and replace them with electronic instruments. We’re going to take out a tuba and put an audio engineer now. We’re putting in lighting and audio techs in the band.” Change is hard. Maybe people see their jobs going away. When we made the decision to take the double reeds away, we cut their jobs. I don’t know exactly what happened with it but I think someone couldn’t re-enlist. So, am I ever worried about a job? Not really but as a tuba player, that could happen to me. If we only need one brass quintet and one for ceremony, then yeah.

PR: In that case I’d imagine that the commander pulled him into his office and said, “We have some bad news. We’re not going to let you stay in anymore.”

AT: They knew where the wind was blowing when that happened. They said “We’re going to cut double reeds by like 90% or something.” You’re going to be like, “Well, I’m a double reed and I’m actually not that good. My head is on the chopping block.”

PR: I bet that’s not what they did. I bet they just took the higher ranking people and just cut them free.

AT: They could have done that too. After you hit twenty, you can be let go.

PR: I know a couple people that had that done. I knew a clarinetist that was trying to learn how to run computers because he didn’t have any secondary skills outside of playing clarinet in the Army band.

AT: That’s scary.

PR: Are there any trends toward staying in the same band for more extended periods of times? Or is it still, you stay two or three years and then go somewhere else?

AT: We’re filling more spots and we’re taking a band out of Korea too. Korea was the black hole that made people rotate.<sup>326</sup> Korea now can be a three year tour and you can take your family over. That stops the rotation. Korea was the one thing in the Army bands that made people rotate.

PR: Because everyone eventually had to do a one year tour.

AT: Yes. So, we’re taking one band away. Another thing that we created, which is really cool, we changed the enlistment to four years. If you want station of choice, you have to sign up for at least four years. So, I think last year 90% of people signed up for three

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<sup>326</sup> The bands in South Korea used to be a one year duty station that all long term musicians were expected to do at least one tour at. On top of that, you were not permitted to bring your family if you had one. So musicians with families did not want to go and with the one year requirement, it tended to force a lot of movement throughout the Army band field.

years and that was it. So, you get the student loan<sup>327</sup> at three years. With this change, 100% sign up for four. Signing up for four years makes everyone more stable. It added like six months to everyone's time.

PR: And you're required to stay at that band for those four years.

AT: What it looks like is, if you sign up for four years to stay at Fort Bliss, then you going to stay at Fort Bliss until you re-enlist. I always say that. You move when you say you're going to move. When you say you're going to re-enlist for somewhere else or for a lot of money. You know that when you say, "I'll take \$16,000." Well, the Army's going to get theirs too. So, you're going to move somewhere. You're moving you know. And they tell you, these are the bands that have a possibility of deploying. So know that. Don't be surprised if you go to Hood and deploy. And that's the best thing we can do is be up front with you. Now I can also give you Fort Leonard Wood<sup>328</sup> that doesn't deploy or Hawaii deploys but it's paradise there. So you want that? Your family's in paradise? You mind deploying? It's a "might." I mean I was in 1<sup>st</sup> ID<sup>329</sup> for three years and I never deployed. Or we could send you to Missouri and you won't deploy, but you're in Missouri. There's a give and take so some people might take Hawaii and not deploy at all. Some people might take Missouri and...nothing against Missouri or some...place like 4<sup>th</sup> ID, Colorado.<sup>330</sup> It's the Rockies. People love it there. Well, they have the possibility of deploying. In fact, they're deploying really soon. I think it's like November so you could be in Colorado.

PR: But not the whole band. It's just portions.

AT: Yeah, so your number might get called. Or we could send you to Fort Knox, Kentucky<sup>331</sup> or Alabama.<sup>332</sup>

PR: It's basically a lot of the basic training bases don't deploy

AT: It's safe to say that.

PR: Or, I don't even know what to call Aberdeen Proving Grounds.<sup>333</sup>

AT: They're moving to Alabama.

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<sup>327</sup> Student loan repayment plan is a possible enlistment bonus that some people are eligible for. With this benefit the military may pay up to \$65,000 dollars of a person's student loan debt.

<sup>328</sup> Fort Leonard Wood, Oklahoma

<sup>329</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> ID stands for 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Band in Fort Riley, Kansas

<sup>330</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> ID stands for 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Band.

<sup>331</sup> 113<sup>th</sup> Army Band in Fort Knox, Kentucky.

<sup>332</sup> 98<sup>th</sup> Army Band in Fort Rucker, Alabama.

<sup>333</sup> This is the U.S. Army Material Command Band and they used to be at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. They have recently moved to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

PR: Oh, are they going to become deployable?

AT: Not really but they still do a little tour.

PR: Do you play any different music than we did before? I know we played “American Soldier” and every post has its own songs. I know like in the First Cav,<sup>334</sup> I played *Gary Owen*.

AT: There’s still that. The only thing that’s really changed is rock band.

PR: I’m just trying to find out if there is any specific, like for example, if I were going to a Navy Band, one of the first things I’d have to learn is *Eternal Father Strong to Save* but in the Army, you’ll never play that.

AT: That’s on our audition sheets now.

PR: Eternal Father?

AT: Not Eternal Father but specific music to your instrument like “God Bless America,” “The National Anthem,” for flutes “Stars and Stripes,” bugle calls...not on the initial audition but for trumpets bugle calls. So, all of that is in the audition music and you have to know it.

PR: Is there anything that you have to do because you’re in the army, something that is Army specific that you wouldn’t have to do if you were in a different branch?

AT: Army specific, I would just say the deployments.

PR: Well, the other branches deploy but it’s usually a little bit different style. So, the Navy might deploy to Australia.

AT: Yeah, but that seems to define us. That’s question number one that everyone always asks. I really don’t think that is what they ask in the Navy. They might ask that, but it won’t be the first question. Or the Air Force. With us it’s question number one. Besides that, I mean Army specific...

PR: It’s kind of a general question. There’s no...It’s hard to answer that question.

AT: Yeah, I would say deployment, because the number one question I’m always asked is deployments. And I just think, “You ask this at the Air Force?” Is that your number one question? I really don’t think so. But I really think they expect that with Marines. I really think that. Maybe I’m wrong so maybe they don’t ask them. But with the Army, they always ask, “Am I going to get deployed? I see all the stuff on the news. It’s never

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<sup>334</sup> First Cav is short for 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division Band at Fort Hood, Texas.

Navy. Maybe some Marines but always Army. So, "Is that going to be me?" Question number one. So yeah, I think the thing that defines us is deployment because we all deploy but it's on the brain of everyone that talks to an Army person.

PR: I don't think there's an answer to this one, but are there any benefits that the Army offers that you wouldn't find if you joined the Navy or the Marines? That's a tough question, I know but....

AT: Yeah, besides the obvious monetary scale where I can show this is how much we make or this is the rank that we come in.

PR: Well, the ranks are going to be pretty much the same and the money you're going to get for that rank. Do you still offer bonuses because I don't know if all the branches offer that?

AT: Yeah, we do. Well, I think the one thing we could offer is that in the future there is an actual chance that they could cut bands completely. Like with the Air Force...or the Coast Guard...one band. I really think, of all the services, the Army is going to be here forever. I can't say that for the rest of the services. I really think that. Even with somebody coming in now. I mean, twenty years down the road, stuff can change from today where somebody is talking to me to possibly enlist for twenty years. I just see the way the winds blowing. The Air Force is cutting bands, music in general, whatever. This is the only program where we can say that we have a 100% chance that we are staying.

PR: Yeah, Everything seems to be downgrading in the music field in the military, and even the Army is, but it's more stream-lined. It's not so much cutting the program as it is finding what's more efficient.

AT: That's the big thing about us. We're so efficient. We're staying one step ahead. I don't think all the other services are. I think that maybe one day if you're Navy or maybe whatever, you might have to maybe transfer to the Army because they're the only ones with music. I see that and if I was Marines that would break my heart if I had to do that.... This is an interesting time to join the Army bands. Everything is changing. I still say that all the other services are just a little bit behind.

PR: Does it help to be in the military for auditions in the premiere bands?

AT: It's all blind but I think so because they're already in the military. As long as they're under E-6, they're cool. They're good to go... We're getting the runners-up now with the idea that they're going to get into the band. So, it's encouraged now. It really is encouraged. And the reason is we're getting people to replace them. We're getting a lot of people so no one's going to deny you. You can come in. Get the stuff you need and

when a position opens up...go for it. And like I said, just a couple weeks ago, the french horn player from Fort Monroe<sup>335</sup> won a position with the West Point spot. And we're going to replace him. In fact, we just heard a girl that's finishing up her Ph.D. from I think Indiana or something and she is going to replace him.

PR: So, it doesn't matter if they are in the middle of an enlistment or anything? They just transfer right over?

AT: They just transfer right over. So, it's better. It's encouraged. That was my thing too. I'm going to do that. I thought I was a good player. I mean, we're good players. We get to our bands and we're hot...Nah, not these guys. I'm like no hard feelings... The other reason I know that is because I get the rejection letters and all the resumes. The people that weren't even invited. You're looking at it, and you're like, wow. Then the cut that was invited, we get their rejection letters. And I'm like, "You didn't hire this person?" Sometimes we get the CDs. The biggest thing a guy from the premiere band said, "Man, if I auditioned today, with these people, I wouldn't make it and I'm in the band." And that's where the winds blowing. But hey, I have a job and I thank God that I have a job. And now I'm grateful for the Army for having a job. Sometimes the grass is not greener on the other side.

PR: Well I appreciate your time and help.

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<sup>335</sup> The Fort Monroe is in Virginia. The band is the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Band and is at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

*United States Marine Band “President’s Own” Phone Interview, 26 March 2011, Jackson, MS*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two overall questions that I want to cover. I want to know the differences in the audition processes for the Marine Band especially as it pertains to the other premier bands and what are your specific responsibilities that you have to do while you’re in the band?

“President’s Own” Marine Band Tuba Player (PMT): Okay. So, the first question was what was my own audition like?

PR: Well, what were your experiences like? What was the audition like? What did you have to do once you did the audition?

PMT: Okay. Well, this is a while back and our auditions have changed.

PR: Oh, have they?

PMT: Well yeah....Things are changing. On the day that I auditioned, there were forty-four applicants for two jobs and the two that got hired was me and [another well known professional tubist]. And what they wanted to hear from us was the cadenza from the first movement of the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto and then they went straight into sight-reading. There was nothing else that was prepared and nowadays we have a list of prepared excerpts, I think about ten or fifteen prepared excerpts that go out to the applicants. They practice those before they come in and we do listen to the prepared stuff plus a solo of your choice and then we get into a little bit of sight-reading as well.

PR: Do you send out a list of recommended solos?

PMT: No. It can really be anything. We’ve had people come in and do very standard [solos like] the Hindemith Sonate or the Vaughan Williams or the Gregson [Contertos]. We’ve had somebody play one of the Arban’s solos in the back of the Arban book.<sup>336</sup> We had a [John] Williams Concerto, not a big long stretch of it a couple of minutes of some kind of a solo. Whatever gives them the best chance to sound as good as they can.

PR: So, it doesn’t even matter if they’ve played something that you’ve never even heard before as long as it suits them well?

PMT: That’s fine. As long as they come out sounding as good as they can. That’s the one thing that they have control over. I’m thinking back to one of our more recent auditions where we heard a lot of standard stuff and the person who made the big impression was playing the *Variations on a Tyrolean Song* from the back of the Arban’s book. And [we

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<sup>336</sup> J.B. Arban, *J.B. Arban Complete Method for Tuba*, ed. Jerry Smith and Wesley Jacobs. 1996.

thought that] was really refreshing and so it made us sit up and listen more and “Oh, that’s nice. Nice sound. Really getting around. Like it.” Made me want to listen to some more. So yeah, we let the people pick the solo of your choice and do that. But back in my day, I played my cadenza, put it away and then there was this big stack of music on the floor that they started putting up in front of us. Some of it was standard transcriptions and things that everybody knows or should know and some of it was in house arrangements. There is no way that you could know that was coming.

PR: Is it kind of like what happens in [International Tuba and Euphonium Conference Mock Band Tuba Competition]?

PMT: Yeah. Something that you haven’t seen before and no one has seen before to see if you can handle it. With my audition they gave us like five or six minutes of playing. It was a long time ago but I remember going through quite a few excerpts, some of which I recognized and some of them, I had not. I mean, how can you make this stuff sound like you’ve played it before when you haven’t? And the second round was all sight-reading if I remember correctly.

PR: Even now would you say there are about two rounds to an audition?

PMT: Generally speaking we will go, in prelims, they will stop, I think it’s every ten people, and say if anyone is going onto the finals. And the finals will be the next day. We used to do it all in one day but now we’ve just said there’s so many [people auditioning] that it’s very draining on the committee. So, we decided to do [the later rounds on a second day]. So, the first round, anyone who advances, it could be just a couple. It could be eight people. It depends on how many there are total. Generally at the tuba auditions we have about 6 finalists. And then with the second rounders, you might narrow that six down to two. Or it might be very obvious and you get your one.

PR: So, depending on how the auditions go, there could be a third round?

PMT: Yeah. There could be a third round depending on the strength of the candidates.

PR: Is the initial round selected by recording, people sending in recordings.

PMT: Well no. We take all comers. It’s a “cattle call”.

PR: That makes sense. Why do you do it in two days? Because if you have 200 people coming....

PMT: Yeah. The most we've ever had for a tuba audition was the most recent one and I think there was 72 [candidates].<sup>337</sup> To listen to all those auditions in one day and then to even conceive of having the finals on the same day, that's just crazy. We had over a hundred trumpet players not too long ago for one of our trumpet auditions.

PR: It's impressive to get through that many people.

PMT: Yeah, you have to keep it moving. We haven't had a tuba audition since 2000.<sup>338</sup> So, that's kind of how we work it now. There is prepared stuff and we send it out in a PDF file as well as an application and career information. They return the application to the operations office and they make sure somebody is not too old or something. They are indeed U.S. citizens, things like that. The day of the audition, registration starts at around 7:30 [in the morning]. I think it's 7:30 to 9 and then at 9 o'clock they start hearing people. You can still walk in after that.<sup>339</sup> You go in the order that you show up at the door. We have talked about having assigned times and things like that. For the amount of people that we have [auditioning], there are too many other problems that come up with it so we decided the best thing we could do is take the people in the order at which they show up. And if they show up and they are number 50, then we can say, "Listen, Come back at noon. It's going to take us at least that long." I think the minimum we will listen to someone is about four minutes. As a guideline, we say that we are going to listen to everybody for at least four minutes. So, they get a fair hearing and it's not like, one excerpt and well you're done. Get out of here. That's not what we want to do. So our band, we've gotten lots of good comments on how fair and equitable the auditions are and we're pretty proud of that. It's trying to give everybody a fair shake.

PR: Now I have a handful of questions related to once you've won the audition. What happens? I know you don't have to do basic training but....

PMT: Right the "President's Own" doesn't have to go to Recruit Training. The Marine Corps calls it Recruit Training or Boot Camp. Different services will call it basic training but recruit training, I think, is the more appropriate term.

PR: Oh. Sorry.

PMT: I had driven in from [a mid-west state] and they offered me the job and I went home and they sent me a letter. Nowadays, I'm sure they just send you an electronic document. Take it into your local recruiter. And the letter basically says, this person has

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<sup>337</sup> This audition was in 2004. Since this interview, there were two more interviews. The audition in December 2011 had 133 tuba players attend and the audition in December 2012 had 74. The former being the highest number of musicians to audition for the Marine Band on any instrument.

<sup>338</sup> There were actually auditions in 2002 and 2004 as well.

<sup>339</sup> The most recent audition recommended that you show up by 9 A.M. but candidates were allowed to show up as late as 12 P.M.



been selected for duty with the “President’s Own.” I can only talk for the “President’s Own” so this probably doesn’t apply to any of the other bands.

PR: That’s why I am interviewing multiple people.

PMT: I’m just talking from my perspective. So yeah. You get a letter for duty with the “President’s Own.” Then you have MEPS.<sup>340</sup> The recruiter took me up to the MEPS station and did all the metical and administrative stuff, raised my right hand, and was sworn in. Then the next day, I got in my car and headed to Washington [D.C.]. They fitted me for uniforms and I was playing concerts within a week.

PR: So, you don’t even have to go through any transitional training?

PMT: That has actually changed too. We instituted a month long in-house military training approximately ten years ago. The new folks, when they report, they are assigned to work with the drum major and the assistant drum major of the band for all their essential training that they are going to need for the job.

PR: Both Marine Corps related and music related?

PMT: Wearing the uniform. Learning how to recognize ranks and all that stuff that someone might not know. Back in the day, you learned that as you went. It usually worked, but sometimes it didn’t. There are plenty of embarrassing stories that can be told I’m sure. So nowadays, we have a month of training time that they get. Then they can start playing concerts.

PR: So, when you went to MEPS, you had to do all the ASVAB-type<sup>341</sup> stuff and all that?

PMT: I think I took the ASVAB test at the recruiter’s office. Wait. I take that back. The recruiter drove me to the Marine Corps Reserve Station and I took the ASVAB there. But nowadays, they probably can do those things online.

PR: As far as the responsibilities while you’re there working, from a non-musical standpoint, do you do things like you have to do in a regular band. Like, do you have PT<sup>342</sup> every morning?

PMT: We are on our own for PT and maintaining personal appearance and all that. Because we come in as Staff NCOs<sup>343</sup>, E-6, they give you a little more personal responsibility that you’re going to make sure that you’re maintained properly. So, our group does not do group PT or anything like that, company runs or anything like that.

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<sup>340</sup> See Appendix A for information on the Military Entrance Processing Station, or MEPS.

<sup>341</sup> See APPEDIX A for more information on ASVAB.

<sup>342</sup> See APPENDIX A for more information on PT, otherwise known as physical training.

<sup>343</sup> See APPENDIX A for definition of NCO.

PR: What I mean though, is do you have to be prepared for semi-annual physical tests and all that?

PMT: We have a semi-annual inspection and weigh in and that's the extent of it. The rest of it is a personal responsibility.

PR: Do you ever have any problems with that stuff? Do people sometimes avoid that?

PMT: Yeah. Some people are blessed genetically and some are not...for that line of work anyway. There are standards and you're expected to adhere to them. The rules are the rules.

PR: The final area is the responsibilities you have musically. What types of groups does the band have? I know they have a concert band and a ceremonial band.

PMT: Alright, a new tuba player, a person reporting to the tuba section, he or she is going to play, first off it's going to be tuba in the band, in the section. We have seven tuba players. We use three and that rotates. We use three on any concert. They will also be issued a sousaphone. And we use two tuba players whenever there is a funeral at Arlington cemetery for a Marine Corps officer either retired or however they died. I mean if they are an officer or were an officer and are being buried at Arlington, we're going to send the band and there will be two tubas on that. There will be other ceremonies around Washington, there could be two tubas. There could be four. For the inauguration we used all seven plus two guys that were just carrying sousaphones. We had nine marching the inauguration parade. One was a bassoon player. Well, that was a pretty good job for a bassoon player and the other guy was out of the library. What else? You might play tuba in a brass quintet for a patriotic ceremony of something like that. Our Tuba-Euphonium Quartet is kind of set in personnel.

PR: Someone would have to retire or something for that to open.

PMT: Yeah, our quartet goes in spurts. It does some stuff and then it kind of goes dormant for eight months. But that's kind of a set group. Some of the guys have set brass quintets [and] get a lot of work doing concerts in colleges and things like that. But you could also be assigned, for instance I'm doing a job tonight, as a matter of fact, it's a brass quintet playing at an annual meeting of the Marine Corps league, which is retired Marines and former Marines. They are having a banquet, and we'll probably play a few marches, we'll play the Star Spangled Banner, the Marine's Hymn, and get their event kicked off in the right way. And we rotate people into that kind of job. Could have been me. Could have been somebody else. We don't have a separate concert band or a separate ceremonial band like other groups do.

PR: As an incoming tuba player, what would their primary performing responsibilities be?

PMT: I think the newer you are the easiest thing to do is put you in concert band and put you on concert for a week because the marching, once you know it, it's fine. It's not too much of a drain on your brain. But to be a new marcher, sometimes the drum major would like, if it's a high exposure marching job in front of a lot of important people, they are going to say, "We want a lot of experienced people there." But a new guy, they can sit and play a concert and are going to be fine.

PR: Does the ceremonial band...I know when I was in the military, I had to go through a big transition when I was in the army learning all the turns and countermarches and stuff that I had to do. Do you have to learn all those things too?

PMT: All the Mace Commands.

PR: Yeah.

PMT: That's part of that month long transition period. And if you're not a marcher, for instance our oboe players and bassoon players don't march and the strings don't march, so they don't get that training. But obviously the tuba players do. So, they'll spend...a substantial amount of time learning all that stuff but even then once they've learning it you might put them in for just a rehearsal. You put them in the band for a rehearsal and let an experienced person do the actual job if there's an occasion for that. If there's a parade at the barracks, we have a parade ground over there; you might put a new person in the morning rehearsal and have a veteran do it in the evening. That's pretty standard.

PR: Do any band members have any non-musical responsibilities? Administrative-type responsibilities?

PMT: Ah, newer folks? Not so much. Obviously we have operations and administrative people and librarians. I have administrative responsibilities because I am the section leader. I have the annual performance review of each person in the tuba section. In addition, I'm the low brass section commander, which also encompasses the trombones and the euphoniums. So, I'm providing input on annual performance review for 19 other people and that goes up to the directors.

PR: What else? There are a bunch of odds and ends that we skipped over. How much time do you spend away from home a year? About? I know it's going to be different from year to year and stuff.

PMT: Our annual concert tour is one month in the month of October. But again only three of the seven guys are going to go. So, it might be every other year that you spend a

month away. Other than that, it's little odd trips here and there. In a few weeks we are taking a band down to Norfolk and we are doing the American Bandmasters Association and that's a two night trip. And there might be other little odds and ends like a trip away for ITEC.<sup>344</sup>

PR: But there's no big long trips except for that one?

PMT: No. Our tours used to be seven weeks but they were reduced to one month.

PR: Do people look forward to them or does it get to be a nuisance?

PMT: Do people look forward to tour? Are they single or married? That's a pretty clear dividing line. Do they have families or are they single? That's a pretty good gauge. I mean it's good. You're out on the road, staying in hotels, playing concerts in a different town every night. You get to see a lot of the country. And the band sounds really good because that's all it's doing for a month. So, I'd say you look forward to it even if you do have a lot of commitments at home.

PR: The one thing I'm trying to figure out is what a new tuba player in the Marine's might do differently then a new tuba player in say the Army and I don't know if you can answer that. But I know there are things like *Sempre Fidelis* that you probably play a lot more than...

PMT: Oh yeah, I would say the stuff that is unique to each service. I can't remember the last time I played the Army Song by itself. We will do an Armed Forces Medley, all five of them there, but there is going to be a different repertoire list. Here's one for you. I think because John Philip Sousa was our director for twelve years, it might be possible that we play more Sousa than other bands because we have such a close tie with him. I mean there's a statue of Sousa outside of our building. So, we play more of his marches than say Filmore or Karl King or things like that. Not to say we don't do those but almost every single concert we are going to do is going to have a Sousa march of some sort on it.

PR: Have you noticed any trends in the Marine Band? I know, for example, last summer the Naval Academy Band was downgraded from a premier band.<sup>345</sup> I'm not saying that could ever happen to the Marine Band but do you notice anything like in downsizing or....

PMT: No. Actually in 2004, we actually got bigger. We got twelve new billets back in 2004. So, I don't see any downsizing coming but that's....

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<sup>344</sup> International Tuba and Euphonium Conference.

<sup>345</sup> This is actually not true. I received clarification in a later interview with Naval Academy tuba player. The correct information can be found in that interview within this document.

PR: Anything can happen.

PMT: I don't know if I would be able to give you [any more information on trends]. Sometimes things are a surprise but I haven't noticed any trends that way.

PR: It's just a concern to me and probably a lot of people that they join the Marine's or something like that and then they...or there is no hope of a job. They prepare for an opening and no openings come up. Because I know the Air Force has been for years just filling up holes as people retire out of it.

PMT: I can't speak about those guys. The only thing like that that I can think of and this dates back to the Clinton administration, the Clinton administration really, really liked having a harp and flute duo in the White House and at the time we only had one harpist. So, we hired another one just so we didn't have to send the same one over there every single night. And we could never take her on tour either because she had to stay in Washington. So, we hired a second harpist and had to tell her, "Hey listen, if the workload drops once they are out of office, we won't be able to re-enlist you." Sure enough, the Bush administration came in and the workload did drop and we did have to let her go. So, it was a shame because she was a really good harpist but we just didn't have the workload for two harpists. So, that's the only thing that I can think of like that. Everybody else, when we got those twelve new billets back in 2004, it was all in the sections that were working....

PR: Just a couple last odds and ends questions. Are there any benefits to being in a military band as opposed to teaching at a university or having a job in an orchestra somewhere?

PMT: The job security. If you're holding up your end of the bargain and doing your job properly, the job security is better. I mean, the bands don't go on strike.

PR: Is it actually possible that if you aren't playing as well as everyone thought, that you could not get re-enlisted?

PMT: Ah, yeah that has happened.

PR: Oh. I had never even considered that.

PMT: If you're doing your job, I think you're fine but if you're not then there might be cause for concern. But the job security is... I don't know what our retention rate is right now but it used to be up in the 90% range for annual retention rate. I don't know what it is anymore but with all these...you hear about all these orchestras going on strike or folding and things like that.

PR: Doing what their local union tells them to do.

PMT: Yeah. Now as for being a college professor, I don't know really because I don't know what those people have to deal with really exactly.

PR: Does the Marine Band ever play with any of the other premier bands or even any of the other regular active duty Marine bands?

PMT: Like two bands on the stage at the same time?

PR: That or just plugging in a person.

PMT: No not really. We did something a few weeks ago where there was a joint armed services choir. This was just a rehearsal and it was the Singing Sergeants, the Sea Chanters, and the Army Chorus, and our two singers and the Marine Band. Actually was it the Orchestra? Yeah it was the Chamber Orchestra. So, that's one way. If you've been to the Army Tuba Conference...have you been up there to that?

PR: Yeah. When I was an undergraduate [student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania], we would do it almost every year.

PMT: Yeah. The AFTE, Tuba Euphonium Ensemble of the Armed Forces.<sup>346</sup>

PR: That was one of my goals when I joined the Army. I wanted to be able to do that but it never happened.

PMT: So, that's some ways in which you might mix people up. A long time ago at the Army Conference, there was an inter-service brass ensemble.....but it's kind of rare that you would have mixing of the services.

PR: I kind of figured. The big thing is if you've ever pulled up any Marines from say Parris Island or anything like that?

PMT: The last person we got from the fleet is one of our public affairs people and she came from the band at Quantico.<sup>347</sup> But it's rare for musicians to come out of the fleet. Not to say that it doesn't happen or that it couldn't happen but usually that's not the people that are winning the audition.

PR: I wasn't even talking auditions.

PMT: Oh you mean have we had to borrow musicians?

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<sup>346</sup> A group that is put together to perform solely at the United States Army's Tuba and Euphonium Conference. Any current military tuba or euphonium player is invited to play in it.

<sup>347</sup> Quantico Marine Corps Band, Quantico, VA.

PR: Yeah.

PMT: Oh. Okay. Not really. We have had to borrow equipment. We've had to borrow a couple sousaphones for the inauguration one time. There was one thing maybe seven or eight maybe more years ago that was like an indoor marching tattoo<sup>348</sup> where it was our band and the Quantico band and some others, I think "Pershing's Own"<sup>349</sup> was there as well. I'm not sure. I didn't do that job but.... We will sometimes cover commitments like if the Quantico band is on leave or if they are out of town and something comes in down there, we have been known to go down to Quantico and make up a ceremony for them. I think they take blanket leave in August. So, they say so and so is on blanket leave. Well, we'll go down and do this retirement ceremony or something like that.<sup>350</sup>

PR: I think that's it. Is there anything that I've missed? I've covered all of my questions. I'm trying to represent the Marines as best as I can.

PMT: I don't want to go speaking for the fleet bands because...

PR: Oh. I interviewed [someone else to get the fleet band perspective]

PMT: Oh good. He can give you a good idea of that side. I'm just trying to give you our perspective of.... Let's see. You know I don't know if people have a clear idea of how much is concert and how much is ceremony playing that they are going to do.

PR: That's a good question. I kind of hinted at it earlier but we didn't really cover it too much.

PMT: I think that you can expect to be wearing the sousaphone maybe 40% of the time.

PR: Do you find that that's a big misconception?

PMT: Well yeah. You think, "Well, I'm going to be just playing concerts all the time," and that's not what it is. The ceremonies are just as important if not more important sometimes. You want to be realistic. And I was warned before I came out here for my audition [by a prior premier band service member]. He said, "You know you're going to wear a sousaphone more than just once and a while." "Really?" "Yeah. Really." "Oh. Okay. Fine." And it's fine. Those jobs, they are what they are and it's part of the job.

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<sup>348</sup> Tattoos are military marching exhibitions. They are often international affairs as the events try to bring in military marching bands from as many countries as possible.

<sup>349</sup> United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" stationed in Fort Myer, VA.

<sup>350</sup> Because the bands tend to work as a single unit, most military bands usually take leave as a group. This means everyone is given vacation at the same time and the military usually gives them two 14 day leave opportunities a year. One is in December and the other is usually sometime over the summer. No one is required to take leave but because of how busy the schedule can be, leave is harder to get outside of these times and is at the discretion of the command staff.

PR: It's an issue when it comes to retention I would imagine.

PMT: Yeah. Some people aren't into the whole marching thing. I haven't known anybody that has said, "Oh, I just can't stand the marching. I'm outta here." And nobody in the tuba section [has done that]. There have been others that have said this isn't for me. Marty Erickson. I remember talking to him a long time ago and he said "Some of the biggest memories I have from my Navy days are when I was standing in formation with a sousaphone." That's some pretty important stuff that you're seeing happen, an Inaugural Parade. That's a big memory. The Obama inauguration...that was a sousaphone all day...until the night. We played the tuba for the indoor balls. But for the ceremony and the Inaugural Parade, it was [sousaphone].

PR: That must have been a long day.

PMT: They are a long day. Everybody slept at the barracks the night before because it was almost impossible to drive into Washington the day of [the inauguration]. So, we all camped at the barracks. Put a sleeping bag in one of the offices and got up at 2:30 in the morning and off we went. But it's only every four years....What else? We talked about the audition. We talked about check in. The initial enlistment is four years and then after that you can generally go two, four, or six years at a time.

PR: But that pretty much is the same whether you're in the premier band or an infantryman.

PMT: Yeah.

PR: So, [a potential musician] could get that information from a recruiter if a person really wants to know that stuff.

PMT: Sure. What else? Initial Enlistment. Nature of the job.

PR: You might not be able to answer this but do you find that you do a little more traveling than someone like [a premier Army Band]?

PMT: I think it's safe to say that we probably do. Well.... That's a tough one. I would guess that we are probably on par with the Air Force and the Navy. Because there is the Army Field Band up there at Fort Meade,<sup>351</sup> they do all that traveling. They do much more than we do but that means that "The Pershing's Own" doesn't have to go out as much.

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<sup>351</sup> United States Army Field Band, Fort Meade, MD.



PR: Another question that I've always wondered, all the premier bands in Washington [D.C.], as I understand it, have functions where they are playing for dignitaries, presidents, and various stuff. How does that get sorted out? Who plays...?

PMT: Who plays where and what?

PR: Yeah.

PMT: Well, as far as I know, we're first call for the White House. That's the whole "President's Own" thing.

PR: Then if you're occupied they go to the next band?

PMT: Well, if we're occupied, we're going to drop whatever it is. Almost guaranteed. If the White House calls and says we need a band. Well alright. Great. We need to cancel or get somebody else to do this ceremony or reschedule this ceremony or this concert. They could say we need a band over here and it's right opposite of one of our concerts. Well, we find the people. We find the bodies somewhere or change the schedule but the White House is our first response. Not to say that other bands don't play there because they do but for the day to day, we need music for this or that, they call us.

PR: So, in other words there are specific occasions that the Army or the Air Force might get called for.

PMT: Yeah. Like the Air Force has a Strolling Strings group. We do too but there were times when the Strolling Strings would go over there for dinner or something like that. Or there is an event; they call it "The Garden Tour." They have one in the spring. It's all day for two days. It's basically four pretty long shifts...four 3 hour shifts and we get the first one and the other three bands from town get the other three shifts. You know. Two per day. Morning Saturday. Afternoon Saturday. Morning Sunday. Afternoon Sunday. We take one of those and I don't know how they divvy up the rest of it. And as far as what band is going to be performing when the minister of defense comes from whatever country shows up at the Pentagon, I don't know if that's a rotational thing or how that works. They have schedules for things. They have schedules for like the National Tree Lighting. The Christmas Tree lighting every December. That rotates every year to a different band.

PR: That is just something I've always wondered because there are four premier bands in the D.C. area and they are all playing for dignitaries but why does one play at one function and one at another?

PMT: The Army. You'll have to ask those guys what their primary dignitary focus? But for that tree lighting, I was just thinking of that, the Coast Guard Band was the band that

played. So, they came down from Connecticut. They actually had the rehearsal at our facility and it was their turn in the rotation. We did the tree lighting... in 2009. So, we'll get it again in 2014 I guess.

PR: Well, I think that covers it. Thanks a lot.

PMT: No problem and if you need anything more let me know.

*The Navy Band Phone Interview, 26 February 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two main questions that I am trying to answer. I want to figure out what the audition processes were for you and what they are now in your band, and I'm trying to figure out what types of responsibilities you have now that you are in the Navy Band.

Navy Band Tuba Player (PNT): Okay.

PR: So, we'll start with the audition questions. What were your first musical experiences like in the Navy? What was your audition process? Did you have to send in a tape?

PNT: Well, the audition process...I did have to send in a tape and a resume. And my tape was accepted so... They invited, I don't know how many people, and it may have been ten or twelve guys. I don't know, maybe fifteen. So, that was how I got invited to the audition process which was in Washington D.C. Unlike some of the other bands, I had to pay my way there and I had to pay for where I stayed. Some of the other bands will pay your way there and your hotel, but the Navy does not do that. And I went through the audition process and after I played the preliminary [round], second round, and final round, I had an interview with the Commanding Officer because he wanted to check me out as to what I looked like and whether I was a good guy and not a jerk. And that was it.

PR: Was it primarily excerpts or did you play some solo music?

PNT: Well, it was a solo and then it was band excerpts and sight-reading.

PR: Is there a lot of weight put into the sight-reading? I know some bands put a lot of weight on sight-reading.

PNT: The sight-reading was fairly heavily weighted. The solo was probably the least heavily weighted although I wasn't on the audition committee for me. But I've been on audition committees and run auditions since then and the solo is a way to just see what you got. It's something that will express the person's musicality because it's something that they have chosen, something that they like, and something that they think that they can play very well. So, it's just a chance for them to spread their wings a little bit. And then it's just a whole lot of excerpts.

PR: Do they get a packet of excerpts beforehand to prepare? Or how much say do they get into what they are playing is kind of what I'm trying to figure out?

PNT: As far as the excerpts are concerned, they don't have any say, so that everybody ends up playing the same excerpts which they've all gotten about the same time. Then

there is sight-reading which everybody gets the same sight-reading material and nobody's had a chance to read them.

PR: Ideally, it's something that nobody's had a chance to see before?

PNT: Well sight-reading, it's possible they've seen it before but what I've done in auditions that I've been a part of is we have music that is composed specifically for the Navy Band and arrangers that are on our staff that arrange things specifically for our band and are not available to the public. And so, we try to draw sight-reading from there or obscure marches or things like that just to see how good somebody is at playing on the fly.

PR: So, that was the audition that you went through. Is that still kind of what goes on now? Is there much of a difference other than maybe an update of the music that you ask?

PNT: Yeah. It's the update of the music. As far as excerpts are concerned, there's ones that are just standards. Like any audition that you play is going to have *Stars and Stripes [Forever]* because that intro section would separate the men from the boys. You can really sound great or you can really sound bad. And then the sight-reading would change because if somebody auditions once and come backs and auditions again, you have to have different sight-reading material otherwise it would be an advantage to the person who's been there before.<sup>352</sup>

PR: The Navy Band has to go through basic training, correct?

PNT: Yeah, they call it boot camp but...

PR: Do you have any advanced training after that because I'm assuming right after boot camp, you end up getting sent right to the band in Washington D.C.?

PNT: For the premier band, you have to go through the same process as every other person going into the Navy to become a sailor. You have to go through the MEPS.<sup>353</sup> You have to do their physical. You have to do the ASVAB<sup>354</sup> test. You have to go through

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<sup>352</sup> The most recent audition in May 2012 had changed significantly from how the audition was described in this interview. No prior recordings were required. However they did require a resume and a letter of interest. After they received that, if the band felt the candidate was qualified, an invitation to audition along with other pertinent information was sent to each candidate, including the required music. For this audition, the list of music included two lyrical solos (an etude from Johannes Rochut's *Legato Etudes for Trombone* taken down one octave and a movement from Ralph Vaughan William's *Six Studies in English Folk Song*) and a number of excerpts in varying styles and difficulties. Candidates were not to prepare a solo of their choice and were expected to only bring one tuba.

<sup>353</sup> See Appendix A for more information on MEPS.

<sup>354</sup> See Appendix A for more information on ASVAB.

boot camp. But then you report directly to the band afterwards whereas the fleet bandmen would go to the military school of music<sup>355</sup> down in Norfolk [Virginia].

PR: When you get to the Navy Band, do you...I'm assuming there has to be some in-processing class where you learn things like the marching style and everything that the Navy Band uses for various ceremonial performances that you need to do. Is there anything like that?

PNT: Well typically, what they've done in the past, what I did was, I showed up and I had a mentor who helped me get all the right uniforms, took me around the building, introduced me to all the officers and the chain of command from the Command Master Chief down, helped me set up my paperwork over at PSD<sup>356</sup>, just kind of helped show me the ropes and get me started. Then I would watch several evolutions of each ceremony that we did. So like a funeral, I probably would watch two of those and then was put on one. We also have a Change of Command ceremony and there's a little bit of a...it's called a Pass and Review. There's a bit of marching there so... Now once a year, we have started to do a review of that. We have everybody show up and go through it several times to make sure all the drum majors are refreshed on that and everybody knows what they are doing on the music and when they make their turns and all that. So, it's a little more involved. Rather than just watching, you actually go through several rehearsals. And even more recently, we've been having command-wide marching rehearsals where we get up there, we'll stand at attention, and make sure we got our hands in the same place and feet in the right angle, doing some marking of time so to make sure people's feet are hitting the ground at the same time and at the same angle and just trying to constantly make everything look better and more professional. So, that is going to be an ongoing thing now but when I showed up it was basically standing behind a tree, out of sight, watching the ceremony and stepping in when I was ready.

PR: So in other words, the in-processing is a little more informal. It happens but there is no set thing where for the first three weeks you will be doing this, this, and this type of thing?

PNT: It's not formal but it's not really informal. They give you a certain amount of time, it's flexible time, but they want you to be up and running relatively smooth and that's up to the mentor to make sure you go through and get your stuff in the first few weeks so that you can actually start doing your job. And at that time, they're giving you a chance to practice and get your chops back and find a place to live. So, there is method to the madness.

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<sup>355</sup> See Appendix A for more information on the Armed Forces School of Music.

<sup>356</sup> PSD stands for Personnel Support Detachment. It is the location on each base that handles all the paperwork for each person stationed at that base.

PR: Once you're in the band, do you typically have any administrative type responsibilities, say secretarial or operations-type responsibilities?

PNT: That's a good question and each premier band is going to be very different because they all have different personalities and different styles. In the Navy Band, they have what are called collateral duties. So, my primary duty is to be a tuba player in the band and do concerts and play ceremonies when needed. And then there are collateral duties that are done by the musicians themselves. Like you'll have a core staff, like an operations chief and then there will be musicians that have the collateral duty of being operations assistants...or public affairs and you'll have the chief who is a staff member and you'll have musicians doing the collateral duty part of that. Very few people don't do collateral duties because that's the way that you get promoted. Obviously, you have to be a good musician and look good in your uniform and all that but it's also the work that you do to help out the mission of the band. So, I would say that everybody has several collateral duties that they do.

PR: So, how many groups in the Navy Band require a tuba player? I am just trying to figure out personnel-wise how many tuba players you have on staff and how often they might get to perform.

PNT: Well, there are two units that use the tuba. One is the Concert Band and the other is the Ceremonial Band. And in the Navy, it's a little bit different than the other premier bands in that it's called a Concert/Ceremonial Band. It's not two separate bands. You'll have the principal players and some of the senior people are full-time on stage and everyone else is divided up into two bands: the A rotation and the B rotation. So, one week the A rotation will be on ceremonies and the B rotation will be on stage with the permanent stage people. And then the following week, they'll swap places so that B Band will be doing ceremonies and A Band will be on stage.

PR: How do you get to be one of the people that just play on stage?

PNT: Usually it's the principal players and sometimes it's the oboists, bassoonists, the harpist, the piano player. They don't march. There is no instrument for them to march with so just by the sheer nature of their instrument they're permanent stage and section leaders. In some cases, there's, for example the euphonium players, there's four of them. They play with three of them that play on stage. How do you make an A and a B rotation with three players? So, what they have is the principal player and the most senior player of the other three on full-time stage and the one guy will be in the A rotation and the other guy will be in the B rotation. So, those two guys alternate and you always have three guys on stage.

PR: That makes a lot of sense. How many tuba players does the Navy Band have?

PNT: We have five. We have someone that is now the operations chief who was a tuba player in the band and decided, for family reasons, that he wanted to go on the staff because it gave him a more stable schedule for his kids. He wasn't working on weekends and he wasn't working on holidays. He goes 7:30 to 4:00 every day. So, he knows what he's doing.

PR: That makes sense.

PNT: Those are the primary performing units. Now there's smaller performing units that are official Navy ensembles. Like there's the Navy Band Brass Quintet that uses a tuba. The Navy Band Brass Quartet uses a tuba. The Navy Band Tuba/Euphonium Quartet uses two tubas. Occasionally there is a brass ensemble concert but it's not an official unit. That's about it. We don't have a Dixieland band.

PR: Those groups, how does it get separated out? With the band breaking up into A Band and B Band, how does that affect those smaller groups?

PNT: Well, the Concert and Ceremonial Bands take precedence. So, these other units, like the brass quintet will occasionally do a ceremony because it's brass and it's loud enough that you can do a small ceremony with brass quintet but it's only scheduled at a time when they're not needed elsewhere. That's one of the difficult things about the concert and ceremonial division is the constant juggling of personnel depending on the needs of the Navy Band. So, sometimes somebody will have to come off of A Band to fill in for a ceremony for somebody on B Band so the A Band guy can do a brass quintet concert or all the guys in the tuba/euphonium quartet are either permanent stage or B rotation. So, it's a little bit easier to schedule for that because we're from the same rotation.

PR: I would imagine a lot of those chamber groups have a majority of their personnel that are stage personnel only.

PNT: Not necessarily. It's kind of whoever the best players are and once a group gets formed, it's a consistent group. You're not plugging people in and out. So, it's always the same five guys in the brass quintet with exceptions. You know. If somebody's on leave or somebody's sick and they have got a gig, they'll bring in a substitute but it's always the same five guys. Now if somebody decides they don't want to be in the quintet anymore or they retire, then they audition amongst the band members and whoever happens to be the best player on that audition day will get the job in the quintet. And so, it could be one of the senior guys, the permanent stage guys, but often times it's the younger guys who are hungry and they're.... so it depends.

PR: Whoever has the motivation. I'm also trying to figure out how the performances break down. I'm assuming from my experiences in the military, I did a lot more ceremonies than I did concerts. I'm sure that's a little less skewed in the Navy Band but how often...

PNT: Actually, it's not. We have funerals going on multiple per week maybe. I don't know the numbers accurately but anywhere from maybe 6-10 a week. Let me see. Five days times two...it could be anywhere from 6-12 per week. And we don't do 12 concerts per week. You know, we'll maybe do one. Usually, in the summertime we do two per week. But then there's also Change of Commands [ceremonies]. There's patriotic openers where we'll play the national anthem and some patriotic music for some event somewhere, retirement ceremonies. So, the ceremonial load is consistent and it's more actual performance than the concert band but that's because there's more performance of ceremonies. It's because you're playing the same music for every ceremony with a few exceptions. And you don't need to sit down and rehearse so much. You just show up and do the gig. You may do a little bit of marching practice right before the gig but with concerts, you have three, four, or five rehearsals for every concert. So often times, the numbers of services are the same but the number of performances are different because of what you're playing. Does that make sense?

PR: Oh absolutely. You play in enough ceremonies, you start to see the same music and the rehearsal is not as needed.

PNT: That's right.

PR: Now, I know there are at least a couple songs that the Navy Band pretty much has as its own. I mean there's *Anchor's Away* and *Eternal Father Strong to Save* but are there any other pretty much strictly Navy Band music that someone should know if they were planning on being in the Navy?

PNT: Well, there's *Navy Blue and Gold* which is something all the guys that graduate from the Naval Academy all love. There's the *Anchor's Away* but there's a Zimmerman march, *Anchor's Away*, which the recognizable portion is in the trio section but the march gets played a lot. Other than that, it's pretty much what the other service bands play. We have some things that have been arranged by our arranging staff that only the D.C. Navy Band will play like we have our *Armed Forces Medley* which is going to be different. It's going to be the same tunes but we always end with *Anchor's Away* and the Army's not going to do that. They're going to end with their song and the Marines are going to end with their song. We have our own version of the National Anthem. I think every band has a little bit different version. But that's about it as far as the identifiable Navy songs. There's one that we play from time to time called *Jack Tar March*.



PR: I've come across that march before. I've never played it though. It's a good march.

PNT: It is a good march.

PR: Does the Navy Band have any tours that it does on a regular basis? [What] I'm trying to figure out is how much time you spend away from your home base.

PNT: The concert band tours once per year typically. And it's usually about [mid-spring]. They're getting ready to leave in three weeks on March 10<sup>th</sup> and they are going to the Northeast. The Department of Defense has five zones in the country and each of the military bands is assigned one of those zones so that the country gets covered rather than everybody going to the Northeast. This year the Navy Band is in the Northeast. They are going to start out going to Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and then next year I know they are doing the Mid-West. I'm not sure where they are doing the next year. So, last year maybe it's the Army who did the Northeast and this year it's us that is doing the Northeast and maybe next year it's going to be the Air Force doing the Northeast.

PR: Oh I see what you're saying. So, it's the premier bands making sure they all don't go in the same spot.

PNT: Right. So, the country gets covered by a military presence but our responsibility this year is the Northeast.

PR: Are there any other extended trips that you take?

PNT: Not on a regular basis. Not as an annual tour. Since I've been in the band, we've done a few trips like two summers ago we spent a week up in Quebec for a military band festival. I've been to Sweden twice for military tattoos, to Norway once for military tattoos,<sup>357</sup> a week in Russia for the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian Navy and we went over as sort of a public relations thing. That was very cool. Played a concert on Freedom Square for about ten thousand people. It was really amazing.

PR: Do the smaller groups get to do any trips at all? I mean could the tuba quartet go for a weekend somewhere and do a master class and perform?

PNT: Yeah they do that but that's all at the discretion of the smaller group. Like if they wanted to do a symposium or convention, that's challenging. I don't know about the other service bands but the Navy Band doesn't have a lot of discretionary funds. So, if they want to do that, it has to be paid for by the sponsoring organization. And so, it takes

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<sup>357</sup> Military tattoos are exhibitions for national and international military bands as well as other ceremonial units. These exhibitions are held in various cities around the world and are often done in outdoor stadiums.

a bit of planning and a bit of elbow grease to get those sorts of things to happen but they do happen.

PR: But it's just not as common as you'd like it to be?

PNT: Yeah. Those are always fun but it's also the needs of the Navy Band and if the tuba quartet wanted to bop around the country and this month go there and that month go there, they're not going to let us do that because they need us in [Washington] D.C. to be doing our primary job which is in the concert or ceremonial bands. Now the quartet is a great boom for the Navy because it sounds great, we play this fabulous music and we have young talent and do good master classes. It's good presentation for the Navy Band but they're not going to say, "Okay, you guys go do that. We'll be without a tuba and two euphoniums for this next concert." They're just not going to do that so it's kind of a balancing act.

PR: Does the band ever find itself collaborating with some of the other either active duty Navy bands or premier bands if you need extra personnel or anything like that?

PNT: Not typically. But on occasion it does happen. Like last year, on tour, one of our bassoonists was pregnant and expecting during tour. And so, one of the bassoonists from the Naval Academy came over and went on tour with the Navy Band. Occasionally, on some of the chamber recitals, we have a string bass player but we don't have any violins or cellos, and since the Marine Band has a string orchestra as does the Army Band and the Air Force Band has Strolling Strings... So, they have string players that we could get to come play when needed but it's fairly minimal. Only on an as needed basis. We don't do a lot of co-mingling with the other... bands. Occasionally, like when... I don't think this is what you're talking about but on a White House arrival, like I've played for the President of China... and some other big people on the lawn of the White House but they'll have each of the bands represented. But that's just part of the ceremony. It's not like "Hey, Army Band. Let's get together and do a quick concert in the Kennedy Center." I don't ever recall doing anything like that.

PR: That's basically the same answer I've been getting. I was just covering my bases. Especially with the Navy and Marines kind of being related, I didn't know if the Navy and Marines had done any interaction like that.

PNT: No, not really.

PR: I have a couple more broader questions just to kind of wrap up and make sure I didn't miss anything. What are some of the benefits that you've noticed for yourself in being in the Navy?

PNT: In the Navy period or in the Navy compared to the other services?

PR: Well both, but in the Navy as compared to civilian life or in the Navy as compared...If you can answer both questions, great but it's mainly towards the Navy as opposed to being a professional tuba player in the civilian world.

PNT: A lot of benefits that I would name are financial in nature. You know, it's nice to get a steady paycheck. It's nice to get medical benefits. As part of your compensation package, it's nice to, after twenty years in the service, to retire with a very modest but at least it's something, pension then medical benefits for the rest of your life.

PR: Do you find that most of the people joining the Navy Band end up staying for the full twenty years?

PNT: I don't know about most...That's a tough question. I'd say probably a large percentage of them do. My intention was not to do that. I got in because there hadn't been many tuba jobs in a while and there weren't any in the foreseeable future. You kind of know when an orchestra guy is going to retire by his age or something and I didn't see anyone retiring, so I got into the service to start a family. I was going to take auditions, and you know I got the family and it wasn't all that feasible to audition and everything. Some guys have gotten out and...One guy is playing second trombone in the Atlanta Symphony. The other guy is in a professional orchestra down in Florida somewhere. A trumpet player is up in New York tearing it up. So, some people say, "The military is not for me," and they get out. Other people say, "This is the gig for me," and they stick around. I guess to answer your question, I'd say that the majority of people that come into the service to be in the premier band, the Navy Band, end up sticking it out.

PR: Last summer while I was working on my dissertation, I discovered that the Naval Academy Band was being taken off the premier band list. Did that actually happen?

PNT: I'm not up on that.

PR: I had just wondered if you had noticed any trends related to that type of thing going on in the Navy. Is the band being trimmed and is there any danger of something like that happening to somebody if they were to come and audition?

PNT: I don't think there would be. You know, I can't say because what seems to be solid right now may change depending on who's President or who's in charge of the Congress but as of now it's a real steady, stable gig. And there are great players. That's the amazing thing, just the amazing musicians that are here. There [are] some challenges to being in the military and being a musician, but there [are] also challenges to being a musician in an orchestra. It's tough to be a musician, but I'm very grateful for my job,

grateful for my career, grateful for my colleagues that I've played with over the ...years I'm glad to be a Navy musician.

PR: Do you have to do any military type things, things like physical fitness? Daily things that an average regular person who wasn't in the premier band but was in the Navy would have to do? Is there a regular fitness test and all that?<sup>358</sup>

PNT: I'm not sure what they all have to do out in the fleet bands, but in the Navy Band that I've been a part of you have physical readiness testing twice a year, which is the mile and a half run, push-ups, sit-ups. But you can also do the swim, push-ups, sit-ups, or now they have the stationary bike, push-ups, sit-ups.

PR: Oh so, you have options for whatever you choose to do.

PNT: Yeah, you can choose one or the other. Then you've got weigh-ins where they check your height and your weight just to make sure you're within the body height/weight standards and whether you're looking good in uniform.

PR: Do you do that stuff on a regular basis outside of the test or is it personal...

PNT: Everybody, it's their personal responsibility. Now, if somebody doesn't pass the height/weight standard... You know, I'm 75 inches tall, 6' 3'', and according to the Navy, the most that I can weigh is 216 pounds. Now say, for example, I come in at 220 pounds. Then they have a tape measure where they take a ratio between your neck and your waist and if they plug in the numbers and it comes in within that standard then I'm okay. But if for some reason or another it doesn't, then you get put on a physical training program where you come in a certain number of times per week and you do running and push-ups and sit-ups. And you'll have somebody making sure that you're eating okay trying to get you back into standards. Pretty much everybody is real cognizant of what the standards are and they keep themselves in good shape. But occasionally, you have got somebody who likes those chocolate cookies a little too much.

PR: Well, I appreciate you talking to me and if there is anything I've missed, because I'm trying to represent the Navy as best as I can, feel free to add it right now. If there isn't [then] I appreciate you talking with me. It's going to help me a ton.

PNT: I'm not thinking of anything. What I would say about the audition is... What I've heard in the past is that guys will come in and, you know, sound like kings on their solos. Playing on an F tuba they'll sound really great. A lot of guys playing really good solos. That's where they put most of their emphasis. Then they pull out their big tuba, and it's like a different player. Small, solo instrument, it's a good thing to have mastery over, but

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<sup>358</sup> See Appendix A for information on physical fitness, otherwise known as PT.

what the Navy is looking for....If somebody is auditioning for one of these bands, it's the large horn that they want to sound good on.

PR: That's what they're making their money on so that's what they are getting hired on.

PNT: Yeah, that's the bread-and-butter horn. I've just heard a lot of players with talent but they come in just really ill-prepared. They would spend many, many, many hours preparing for an orchestra audition, but they think, "Oh, it's just a military band...I can do that." The quality across the services is quite high.

PR: Do you ask more excerpts on the entry tape that way you make sure that you get a...

PNT: Oh, we don't do the tape anymore. That's what happened when I came in was the tape. Now, it might even be a legal thing. I'm not certain but it might be a legal thing where we're required to hear everybody. We'll ask questions about your height and weight because if you're 5'6'' and weigh 400 pounds, there is no way you're going to make it into the service band because there is the height/weight standard. So, why waste your money and time coming out here and preparing? Other than that, we'll listen to everybody just to make sure everybody has a fair chance.

PR: As long as they're willing to make the trip, you'll give them the time to get the chance?

PNT: Yeah. So, I think that's everything that I can think of to say.

PR: Okay Well, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.

*Navy Fleet Band Tuba Player Phone Interview, 7 June 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are two parts to this interview. I want to find out about the whole beginning process that you had to go through. What the audition process was for you and what the entry process is to join the Navy? And the second half is about what your responsibilities musically and militarily in the Navy are now that you're actually in?

Navy Tuba Player (NT): Well, I'll start with the intro. It was actually kind of interesting because I have a Master's in Tuba Performance. I studied under [someone currently in a professional symphony] before he won that job. I was actually finishing up my Master's. Then I studied under [a professional trombonist in a major opera company]. By the way, his son plays in "The President's Own." I think he's a Master Sergeant now. So anyways, the flip side of this is when I got into the Navy, there were no tuba openings. So, it's kind of an as need basis. They were full on tubas. So, I asked if they had a trombone opening. Well, I can play trombone. I minored in trombone. Life is good...performance major. Right? So cool. They had a baritone opening and it was a mandatory trombone double. So, I played euphonium for a month. I borrowed one from my professor...at college. And I grabbed my horn and after that I went to [the band that had the opening] and auditioned. Now, I spent probably two hours just on the euphonium and trombone audition. But I'm going to have a slanted view of this because I got done playing the euphonium and had this chief looked up at me who could play his tail off and look up at me and go [makes a dissatisfied sound]. "Alright, let's hear some of the trombone." So, I picked up the bass trombone and started playing Blazhovich,<sup>359</sup> you know page after page. And I started, I think it was number 21 [Sings a melody from the etude book] and he cut me off and he said, "Are you going to play this entire thing in this octave?" And the first thing that went through my mind was "Oh God, I'm screwed." The next thing was, "Yes chief, that's where I practiced it. This is a tuba book. That's where it's written." He goes, "Ok, that's fine. Let me hear it." So, I started over and finished playing and I played my scales and he said "significant improvement from the last horn." And I went, "Well, I've been playing the other one for about a month." And he goes, "Really?" And I said, "I want a job, chief" And he goes, "Ok." So once the audition was quote-unquote over, remember the audition was "over," I said, "So, do you want to hear some tuba now?" He said, "Sure." So, I picked up my F tuba and played the Vaughan Williams Tuba Concerto<sup>360</sup> on the stand, first movement, which just happened to be my senior recital piece. So, I just picked up the horn and [sings the opening measures], and my recruiter, who was an all-state tuba player, looked at the chief, who was the recruiter for the musician part and they looked at me and they looked at each other and they looked at me and they looked at each

<sup>359</sup> Vladimir Blazhevich, *70 Studies for BB flat Tuba* Vol. 1 (Paris, France: Alphonse Leduc, 2002).

<sup>360</sup> Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Concerto for Bass Tuba* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1955).

other and said, “No freakin’ way.” The next thing I know the chief is walking around his house, I found out later, because he wanted to hear me. He wanted to hear my sound. I graduated from A school, and since the Army, the Marines, and the Navy all go to the same A school.<sup>361</sup> I got a 2.9 on Euphonium, a 3.0 on trombone, because that’s what I went there on, and after our F2, which is our final exam, I had one week before I left and some people pulled some strings for me, they wanted me to audition on tuba. So I walked in, basically for a walk in-walk out, yes or no, can you cut it audition. I played the Bruce Broughton.<sup>362</sup> And I walked out with a 3.15 tuba score.<sup>363</sup> The entire time I was there I was fighting the horn, everybody knew it. And when I left the school, it was, “Yeah, he really can play.” Ironically it was how I got my foot in the door. I spent almost four hours auditioning but I made it. I did my job. I did what I had to do to get in. And the day I graduated, I actually got a call from that chief that auditioned me and he said, “I heard you did a tuba audition.” I said, “Well yes Senior Chief” He said, “The reason you got in was tuba playing. Anyone who had the balls to come play the horn for me after only a month and can sound like that on tuba, I give him a shot.”

PR: Do you do all three instruments now?

NT: I basically just play tuba. I’m a hack on euphonium. I can play it but I’m a hack. We all have come to that conclusion. So, I was here for like three months and the detailer, who was a Master Chief and a tuba player, called my Senior Chief who was my AD, my assistant director. We have one officer and the next person would be the AD who would be the senior enlisted. And basically he said, “I need a tuba player in Italy, [one of your current tuba players] is going to Italy. You’re not getting a replacement. You have a 3.15 tuba player. Congratulations. He scored three points higher on tuba than he did euphonium. Why the hell is he on euphonium,” is basically what they said. And it was actually kind of interesting because no one could get into the Navy on tuba and several of the people at the School of Music were absolutely appalled. But they said, “You know what? He did what he had to do to get his foot in the door. It’ll be a year before you play tuba.” And they were all right. There was a Sergeant First Class..., wonderful tuba player, I think he was at least a 3.20 player because he was a first floor instructor<sup>364</sup>, he looked up and said, “If I wasn’t an E-6 up for E-7, I would probably be auditioning on euphonium next week.”

PR: Just because there are openings?

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<sup>361</sup> See School of Music in Appendix A for a definition of A school.

<sup>362</sup> Bruce Broughton, *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* (Boca Raton, FL: Edwin F. Kalmus & Co., INC., 1987).

<sup>363</sup> These scores are out of 4.0. A person is required a 2.7 to graduate from the School of Music and 3.0 or higher is considered excellent. Scoring 4.0 is not realistically possible.

<sup>364</sup> At the School of Music, private lessons are taught on the first floor and the upper floors are branch offices, classrooms, a repair shop, etc. Furthermore to teach private lessons, you must have a playing score of 3.20 or higher. So the term first floor instructor means any private teacher at the school of music.

NT: There were openings on euphonium but not tuba. So, it's been good. Now, playing experiences in the Navy...I've played in Carnegie Hall with my college. I've played all over the United States but it's all been from a classical point of view. I went to [my undergraduate school]. Most people haven't heard of it but when the CBDNA<sup>365</sup> conference was held in New York in 2005, it was the first time it had ever been held in New York. All the big bands auditioned. There were schools like the University of North Texas, University of Texas, University of Florida, and here we were out of nowhere.

PR: I think I know someone who teaches there now. And if he teaches there, it must be a good school.

NT: I look at it from the standpoint [of the fact] that all of our faculty play [in major symphonies]. So, our faculty was first rate. Anyways, I got off track. Playing in the military has been different but more satisfying. I guess in the real world playing, concerts are mainly where people enjoy entertaining music. Military music is a lot of background music. People don't come to listen to you all the time but sometimes they do and that's when it becomes fun. A lot of times our job is literally to cater to our constituents which are our officers because they are the ones that let us keep our job. So let's face it, when a flag officer comes up and grabs a microphone and the band's playing, you cut the band. That's what we do. You do those change of command ceremonies, where you listen to a guy go blah, blah, blah, blah for thirty minutes; I am great, I am powerful, look what I did because that's our bread and butter. You just learn that that's part of the job. It's going to happen. But it's the other times when you play for "Run for the Wall" which starts in California and ends up in DC.<sup>366</sup> This is an evolution that is a bunch of vets getting together and making sure that everyone of our comrades in arms has been accounted for. Now I try to justify my job in a lot of ways and if you knew my family, I have some military history in my family. I'm not trying to brag but let's put things into perspective. My grandfather served in Vietnam in '69, '70, and '71...He was nominated for the Medal of Honor at least once, won a silver star, wore everything but the purple heart that you could get...a decorated war hero. And here I am, little Navy Band schmuck enlisted with a Master's degree thinking to myself, "What am I doing to make a difference?" And I was at the "Run for the Wall"...the first time I had done it and this huge one-armed man was standing there with a Medal of Honor around his neck and he told his story. And I was watching this big, huge grizzly man who just got down from the podium, talking about his experiences in Vietnam, what happened. You could read his bio and learn everything about him. Realize this man truly was a hero. Well, we did all of our honors for all the dignitaries that came in and we had the Tuskegee Airmen there, and we had the

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<sup>365</sup> College Band Director's National Association.

<sup>366</sup> "Run for the Wall" is a two week Motorcycle ride that usually occurs in late May and travels from California to Washington D.C. Its goal is to promote the locating and welfare of all POW/MIA from current and past wars.



Navajo Windtalkers, and we had all sorts of people we paid honors and homage to and even several flag officers. It was like twelve or fourteen such honors. It was insane for us, and we weren't even supposed to do it but we do because of who these people are. Well I had a khaki<sup>367</sup> in front of me and since you're a musician, you know, you can go on autopilot but not in the *Star Spangled Banner*. And I made the mistake watching movement and turning my head to it because I am one of the tuba players and I have been noted several times by my khakis because they've come up to me and said, "you know, the only reason we're not looking at you when there's tempo issues is because we don't have to. We know that you of all people are going to follow." Which is a compliment, it really is. It's saying "he watches like a freaking hawk. I don't have to worry about it. If my baton is moving, he is going to be with it." So, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye and I looked at this huge man and he was crying. And it was everything I could do to keep on playing. And I realized in that moment why I had a job. It was because of the hope that I gave and inspiration that could be brought behind it and when that happened it made this job a lot more meaningful and also put things into perspective for me. This job does have its importance. When you see people coming home off of airplanes and crying when they hear their service song, that makes a difference to you even though it's hard to keep on playing. It's not something that we take for granted. What's neat about this job is [for example, the New Orleans Navy Band] is the only band in the fleet that can play New Orleans-style music in New Orleans. Now imagine this classically trained [tuba player] with a Master's and going, oh by the way, you're in brass band, you have a gig next week. And if not for the trombone in the group, I'd be screwed. I can get lost in Saints<sup>368</sup> and I didn't even know that it was possible. I looked up and said, "What do you mean the music's not written down?" [They said,] "Oh you can hear it." [I said] "What do you mean it's not written down? I'm going to need a flip folder." [They said] "The hell you are. This is New Orleans-style..." That's the way the conversation went. So anyways, now the Navy is getting smaller and they are not letting anyone extend.<sup>369</sup> One of the trumpet players just finished his doctorate in trumpet performance and he wants to stay there because he's not leaving. So he tried to extend. Everyone's being shut down. Everyone's being denied. But this lowly little tuba player has been asked to extend three times because they love how I can play in brass band.

PR: It sounds like you've gotten better.

NT: Well, you can look us up on YouTube and Facebook so I'll let you be the judge.

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<sup>367</sup> In the Navy, any enlisted sailor above E-7 has a uniform that is khaki colored. The rest of the sailors primarily wear white or black.

<sup>368</sup> This is referring to the song *When the Saint Go Marching In* and is often played in New Orleans.

<sup>369</sup> Extending simply means to continue serving in the military. If you extend then you go through the re-enlistment process that includes signing a new contract and re-taking the oath of service.

PR: I think I already did. Before I started working where I am now, I actually auditioned for the Navy and came very close to enlisting. So, I looked up your band because I thought there might be a chance that I got stationed there. So, I've actually seen those. But the Navy must call it something different. When I was in the Army, they called groups like this Dixieland band.

NT: We actually consider there to be a difference between the Dixieland and the brass band. And it's a feel with the rhythm section which would definitely include the tuba player. So, a lot of times, and what I've had to think about is I am a bass player not a tuba player and I need to sound like an electric bass. And that's where I've had to learn a different style. You play chicken or when you play some of the pop tunes...they are arrangements by a group called "Youngblood Brass Band."<sup>370</sup> And we can actually pull off *Brooklyn*<sup>371</sup> and do it well. And it's because of the musicians and the style of the music there. And it's kind of funny. Other bands try but it's not as accepted as it is down there because in New Orleans, the city lives and breathes music. And that makes it so much different. Where else can I say that I've played for over eight million people in four years? That includes Mardi Gras.

PR: You probably played in one of the parades.

NT: Oh yeah. We didn't play in it the year after Katrina and our bass player played in it one other year. But I've done it all the other years. So playing in the Navy, you have to be very flexible but it's also very fun. I mean you pretty much have to be on the spot ready to go. We played a gig for a museum and they had a bunch of last minute changes at the D-Day performance and the sponsor came up to us afterwards and said, "I've never seen a group able to adapt as well as you all have. Wow. Thank you all so much." But therein defines the title of our position. So, I kind of remember some of the things we had at A school like *sempre gumby*, always flexible. The other half of this job is going to be the collateral duties. Technically as an E-4, you shouldn't have any collateral duties, but when I got to this band, there were about 20 E-4s and 3 khakis.<sup>372</sup>

PR: What's a khaki?

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<sup>370</sup> A group made up of Trumpets, Trombones, Saxophones, Drummers, and a Tuba. They play modern music similar to the New Orleans style second line bands.

<sup>371</sup> One of the pieces that the Youngblood Brass Band has recorded and performed.

<sup>372</sup> E-4 refers to an enlisted pay grade. For more detailed information on this, go to Appendix A

NT: A khaki is a Chief<sup>373</sup> or an officer. But anyways, we've been put in a lot of collateral duty positions and nothing has changed. So, I've been everything from transportation to building manager to the last one I've kept for almost two years is operations.

PR: So, what you're basically saying is except for some E-4s most people have some kind of secondary job that they have to do when they are not playing.

NT: E-5s? Yes in most bands. This is a small fleet band. If you hit one of the big fleet bands, even as an E-5 you won't be doing any collateral duties. You will just be playing. At E-6, you're going to have to do both. We're talking in DC band because they all go in as a first class. You have to get into a wait line to do a collateral duty. It gets taken for granted at the smaller fleet bands. In fact, we have a bass player and a vocalist who were both E-4s within the last six months, make the DC band and our vocalist was actually a cross rate<sup>374</sup> and because he's had sea time and all this other stuff, he's going up there with an entire rack,<sup>375</sup> surface warfare, and collateral duties, and his brag sheet is just incredible. And nobody's going to be able to compete with him. You know. It's amazing.

PR: Doing these collateral duties, is that something you want to be doing?

NT: A collateral duty in the Navy? What it helps you do is compete with your peers in the coveted EP, which is an early promote. Now the way the Navy is set up if you have five people, then you can give one EP. It goes in variables of five. So, if I have five people I can give one. If I have six, then I can give two. If there's eleven, then you can give three. So, however many people there are, that's how you're going to compete with for your quote-unquote, EP. So, what they do with these collateral duties is, they look up and see who's been doing what and they give it to the people who deserve it, for a lack of better terms. So, yeah, a collateral duty helps you get advancement because that EP gets you significantly more points on the test. It can be the difference between going into the test with a 3.8 and a 4.0 or a 4.2.<sup>376</sup>

PR: Then that brings up two questions. Is it better to be stationed in a smaller band so that you can get the opportunity to do that stuff especially when you're lower ranked? And two, what happens if you don't get the EP?

NT: If you don't get the EP then you get an MP, which is must promote. One is 0.2 points lower. It basically makes a difference of ten points on the test, on the overall variable.

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<sup>373</sup> A Chief refers to Chief Petty Officer and is the short rank for the enlisted ranks of E-7. For a more clear understanding of the military ranks and ratings see Appendix A.

<sup>374</sup> Cross rating basically means to learn to do a second job.

<sup>375</sup> A rack is the group of ribbons and awards that are pinned on a person in their dress uniform. The awards are usually placed on a metal rack on the left-side of the service-member's uniform.

<sup>376</sup> This test is unrelated to the audition tests mentioned before in this and other interviews where the maximum score is 4.0.

Now in the last year, they haven't advanced very many people in my rate so then it's what we basically call closed. So, you have people scoring really high on tests to get promoted. Recently it just opened back up and there are a lot of people trying to get rank. So, from that stand point, I guess it could be better to be at a small band. But look at it this way, you're an E-4, all you should need to worry about is playing. Does that make sense?

PR: Yeah.

NT: You shouldn't have to worry because once you hit E-5 you're instantly going to have the problem of, "Well, he's an E-5. He needs more responsibility." So, he becomes LPO<sup>377</sup> for a group. And I think the other services do this better but I had a Master Chief tell me one time that military bands don't fit well. Bands don't fit well into the military and we try to adapt them as best as we can but there is no physical way to really adapt the band to the Navy. You just can't do it, but you have to. So, we do the best we can.

PR: What is the typical test like then in order to get promoted? Is it just a playing test or what?

NT: They consider all your playing average and everything to be added up in your evaluation. So, you have your uniform standard, your playing ability, your leadership characteristics. Everything's in your eval... You walk into the test. The test is multiple choice. It's usually two hundred questions and you have three hours. Now about forty of the questions are fleet questions that you should just know. You either are going to know them or you're not. Standard Navy questions like, [At] what distance should a salute be given to an officer? How far out from sea should you be before you start dumping trash? What is the weight limit on the trash in order to be let go in a cubicle in order to be sure it will sink? All these questions that you either know them or you don't and there's no way to know all of them. You're going to laugh at this one, "What does a sound powered telephone run off of?" So, all the questions you had at boot camp and then some are the type of questions you're going to see. So, these are basic knowledge questions and since I'll never be on a boat, how does that apply?

PR: Will you ever get sent on a...I was told by the people that auditioned me that it's not really possible to get deployed to anything dangerous in the Navy bands, but you can get sent on a duty tour to Brazil or something like that.

NT: Well, you have to be in Seventh Fleet,<sup>378</sup> or Japan, or Italy. And then you pretty much have to volunteer to do it. They don't make you. So, it's one of those things that you can do but it's on a volunteer basis. So, yeah if you go on a boat, it's not going to be

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<sup>377</sup> This is an acronym for Leading Petty Officer.

<sup>378</sup> The Seventh Fleet is based at Yokosuka, Japan.

anything dangerous. They're not going to put you in battle in wartime or anything. And you're pretty much never going to leave your little bunk or cubicle. So, I mean all you pretty much have to do is study. The people that go on those want to make rank because they want to pick up that surface warfare.

PR: So, there's no actual playing involved when you do that stuff?

NT: There is but it's usually when the people hit the shore duty. You're going off and playing for the ambassadors at all of the embassies.

PR: If I was going to do that, wouldn't I need to get two trumpet players, a trombone, and a horn player to come with me? Otherwise, how does that work?

NT: Well they ask, "We want to send the rock band on tour. Do you all want to go?" Or the show band, they want to send a variation of the show band, which one of the saxophone players wants to go? Or the combo....So, it's usually not the very big groups but it's the ones that are flexible. So someplace like Italy, it's going to have three brass quintets, they just move people around.

PR: So, if my memory serves me, there are 11 fleet bands, the Seventh fleet and the Italy band are massive and they have three brass quintets and stuff? Compared to your band, what's the difference?

NT: Our band is tiny. We have 32, maybe 33 people. If we want to actually participate in a parade, we have to march everybody. So, the last time we did a parade, the bass player that made the DC band, was playing a clarinet. He had no idea how to play it but he had to hold it. I've never actually done a parade, or at least one I had to march in. Every parade I've done here has been done with the brass band and we start at point A and end at point B and meander in between. I like that type of parade.

Oh, one more thing about the test, the test is pretty bad. A question from the test could be, "In the melody line of the *Star Spangled Banner*, the second note in the eighth measure, the first note in the eighteenth measure, and the third note in the second measure make what chord inverted?"

PR: Is it multiple choice?

NT: Yes, it's multiple choice. Still it's like, I can figure this out if you give me a minute, but really? The other issue with the test is that you may look at your score sheet when you're done and they say, "You missed questions on this, you missed questions on this, and you've missed questions on that. You missed questions on intervals," but that's not the reason you missed the question. It wasn't because of the interval, it was because they added transposition into the interval and you couldn't figure it out. So, usually the

questions on the test are like, “If the clarinet is playing an A, a saxophone is playing their B flat, and the trombone is playing their F, what chord is it?”

PR: It sounds to me like they’re trying to militarize the test so that it was something you would do if you were in the infantry or something. It’s not realistic.

NT: Exactly. And the problem with the test is, ok granted, we can figure out these range limitations of each horn. I mean you can argue every single point on the test, but it is what it is. You can figure out the notes for each instrument and put them all together and figure out the chords, yadda, yadda, yadda, but it boils down to the fact that you have educated people fighting for rank. Let’s face it, 90% of people in the Navy bands have degrees and 5 % have their masters and another 5% on top of that have their doctorates. On average, these guys aren’t stupid. Now you have these guys fighting for rank. And if they don’t make the test hard, what’s going to happen?

PR: I’ve heard that you have a timeline to make, for instance E-6. Is that an actual issue that you have? Is that happening right now in the Navy bands...where people are being forced out...especially with promotions being denied so much?

NT: Yes, that’s one of the reasons I’m getting out.... Again, it is what it is and I can either complain about it or I can make the best out of it. I mean, the Navy is pretty much the best thing I did with my life. It paid for my student loans. It paid for two kids. I’ve had \$20,000 worth of surgery this year alone...and I didn’t have to pay for a dime of it. I mean that goes for all the branches but it goes to the standpoint of it is what it is. Make the best of it and that’s what we do. People getting tenured out, we got one guy getting high tenured out<sup>379</sup> [next year] and he’s a trombone player. And his attitude is, “Well, the Navy is fixing to pay me a bunch of money.” Well, when we get tenured out, he gets like eight grand. Well, it is what it is. Could I argue and complain that the Marines have their test like this? I could, but I’d probably get the answer, “Why don’t you go join the Marines then.” If you look at it from the perspective of the only reason I’m having a problem is because I can’t take a test well...so, if that’s my problem and I wanted to stay in, I would probably join the Army. And I’m actually looking at an Army Reserve band.... And not only do I have a degree but while I was working on my Master’s, my minor was in conducting so guess what I’m going to be looking at?

PR: Warrant officer?<sup>380</sup>

NT: Yes sir. Now, here again, it’s experience. And experience is experience. But I can walk in and say, “I don’t know how to do a Pass and Review<sup>381</sup>, but I know how a Change of Command ceremony is supposed to go.”

<sup>379</sup> See HYT (High Year Tenure) in Appendix A for a better explanation of this.

<sup>380</sup> The commanders for most active duty bands, regardless of the branch, are warrant officers.

PR: And you can learn that stuff. It's not rocket science.

NT: Exactly. Again, it is what it is. So, you don't have to worry about it. Just keep on going.

PR: Ok, we've covered an awful lot of stuff so far. But I want to make sure I get all the questions in because I ask the same basic questions to everyone. So, let's kind of work backwards, since we were talking about responsibilities and we'll work backwards to basic training. So in your...band, it sounds like you have a ceremonial band, a concert band, a brass band and a Dixieland band. Do you have a brass quintet too?

NT: We don't have a Dixie[land] band but we do have a ceremonial band. We have the show band, the show band combo, we have the rock band, and we have what we call the rock band combo which is like the show band but with a cut down version of the rock band. And we have a brass quintet and a woodwind quartet when it's needed. We have enough winds that we can put that together and we have the brass band.

PR: But there's not tuba in a woodwind quartet. That's where I was going at this from. If I'm a person who's thinking about join the Navy as a tuba player, what are my playing opportunities? If I join [your] band, it sounds as if there are about four groups that I could find myself in, not at the same time. But there are four groups that require tuba players. How many tuba players does your band have?

NT: We're billeted for two but we currently just have one. Now as a tuba player, you're going to have to be able to play here brass quintet, ceremonial band music and I'm going to use that for both Change of Commands, for ceremonial bands and parade bands, and we are going to have brass band which is a breed apart and makes no sense but anyways...

PR: So, you play in all the groups yourself? There's no one to share duties with? You're basically on all the time?

NT: We have two tuba players down here right now and I've been in brass quintet but the guy in there is better in brass quintet than I am. So, he respects that I can play better in

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<sup>381</sup> A Pass and Review is the final portion of a Change of Command ceremony. In it, all of the groups will parade past the review stands. If the band is a marching group then it will lead the parade before performing a maneuver that allows it to stay on the field while also getting out of the way of the rest of the parading troops. Once all of the groups have marched off of the field, the band finally marches off of the field as well. This is one of the most involved portions of any marching ceremony as well as the most visible. If the group performing is not a marching group then it simply plays on the side of the field while the marching groups march off.

brass band than he can and I respect that he can play in brass quintet better than I can and we're happy with that.<sup>382</sup>

PR: On the other hand though the large ones, the Seventh fleet and all that, must be huge group if they can have three brass quintets. That must be much larger number of ensembles.

NT: It is. But also the advantage of that is...the reason they have smaller bands isn't just because they're trying to send more groups out. It's also because they are acclimating themselves to the deploying environment.

PR: I knew some people who started in Seventh fleet before they got sent somewhere else.

NT: The band in Italy is adapting to the groups they play in so they send out a bunch of small ones. The band in Chicago plays a bunch of ceremonies for the cadets, two or three times a week, so they use two tuba players in their marching band all the time.

PR: Would you say that you primarily play public relations or more ceremonies, Change of Commands and things like that?

NT: Depends on where you're located.

PR: So, the band stationed at the Great Lakes<sup>383</sup> might play more ceremonies and your band might do more public relations?

NT: Yes. Exactly. That's one reason why people get on tours or go on cruises with the fleet. It's because they get away from the ceremonial band and try something different.

PR: Do you notice any trends happening? You mentioned that they started allowing people to get promoted, is there a trend to down-sizing? I read an article recently that Military Band's funds are getting cut. Matter of fact, I even heard last year that they were taking the Naval Academy Band and turning it into a regular band. Is there trends like that towards down-sizing the Navy?

NT: There's always talk and there always will be. In the '40s, there was a band on every Carrier. So, they're slicing us back. When I first got in, they had cut the entire Italy band, they had told us to cut 25 billets and it was a certain number of officers and enlisted. So, they cut the entire Italy band. Basically the officer in charge was smart and he said, "You

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<sup>382</sup> There are inconsistencies with the number of tuba players in his band. In the previous response, he stated that there is only one tuba player there and now he states that there is two. The interviewer missed this in the interview. However, this inconsistency does not hurt the overall response that his band is billeted two tuba players.

<sup>383</sup> Great Lakes, IL.



need to tell the Admiral in charge that he's fixing to lose his band." And somebody didn't do it. And the day after the XO<sup>384</sup> was in charge, and I've seen the e-mails it was, XO to CO, "Where's my band?" Five minutes later, CO to XO, "I just found out two minutes ago and I will get back to you." The next day, the band was reinstated. So here's the issue, for the entire and I mean the entire Navy band personnel which is about 450 people, it cost, what is it, about 2 million dollars. It is the price of one tomahawk missile.

PR: I'm with you. The argument doesn't make sense but the argument is out there because it's easier to make that argument rather than cut something else or to actually look into the budget.

NT: The way they are looking at it is, everybody else in the Navy is getting smaller so should the band. Fair enough. Well, as Donald Trump put it in an interview one time, "They're cutting peanuts. Cut it where it's important and don't worry about it because you're skimming fat everywhere instead of just handling the issue." And that's what we're not having very good luck with.

PR: It sounds like they must have found some normalization if they are starting to promote people again.

NT: What happened was, and this will hit what you told me, they made the academy band a strictly E-6 position band and it froze all the E-5 and E-6 positions. So, they wouldn't advance anybody. Now that's liquidating a little bit and now that band is an E-5 and E-6 band. You get there as an E-5, it's kind of helping the ranking system a little better and they also started...

PR: So, the Naval Academy Band isn't a premier band anymore?

NT: It's still a premier band. And the other thing they've done is, they've really hit the chiefs across the board pretty hard; where if you've been in that position more than three years, you're getting looked at. I had a senior chief look up and he just knew he was done. He said, "I'm done. I'm going to retire." And next week he picked up master chief and was like, "I was so done. They were going to retire me."

PR: So, what do you do if you don't have twenty years in? You're just out of luck?

NT: Pretty much. If you're a first class, you'll hit twenty. Now they've also rearranged it. I think it's 23 years for a chief, 26 for a senior, and like 29 years for a master.<sup>385</sup> You're

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<sup>384</sup> XO stands for executive officer and is usually the second in command of whatever military group is below of a typical military ranking system. The top ranked person is the CO or Commanding Officer.

<sup>385</sup> At twenty years of service, a person can retire from the military with retirement benefits. If you leave before that, then you don't receive any. In addition, my people decide to stay in even after twenty years.

not going to see any higher than that for a musician because we're not a needed rate so it's going to be...yeah, I've seen first classes with six stripes on their arm...because they are in a position that still needs to be filled. So, until they get all that fixed that's how it's going to be. And the higher tenure has only come around in the past ten years. So from that standpoint, you used to be able to be an E-4, E-5. People used to love being an E-5 and retiring, because they didn't have to worry about collateral duties or anything. They could just play.

PR: So, you've been stationed [at you current band] your entire career?

NT: Yes.

PR: Is there movement that happens. I'm trying to find out, is there a lot of movement within the bands? If you were to stay in, would you be with [your current band] awhile or would you constantly be shipping around between all the bands?

NT: I would be one of the few people that could stay here for seven, maybe eight years and they'd let me because I'm a needed position and they'd let me do it. On the flip side, they like rotating every three or four years. There have been some people, I knew this one chief, who stayed in Italy for ten years. So yeah, it can be done, but it's a rarity.

PR: How much say do you have in where you get sent next?

NT: The lower you are in rank the more choices you have.

PR: That makes sense, because they want to keep you in.

NT: More importantly, look at it this way, the higher you get up in rank, the less places they can send you. And once you hit khaki, when you hit that E-7, it's "you're going here." We had a senior chief move in two days last week. "We need you in Millington next week. Do it now."

PR: That'd be tough to plan for I'd imagine.

NT: Well yeah...

PR: Let's go back to the initial process. I just have a couple questions. I actually went through the whole audition process once so I know what it's like. Did you go to [your band] to audition?

NT: No there was a recruiter [in a town close to my home].

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Because of this, the military has a limit on how long you can stay in depending on what your rank/rate is. See Appendix A for more details

PR: Is that normal?

NT: Not really. But it was closer to take me to [where I did the audition] than it was to [the Naval Band]. You pretty much have to be auditioned by a khaki who has been through the unit leader course. You have to have certain credentials to be able to [hear an] audition.

PR: I think we've covered a lot of it. If you could do it all over again, would you still join the Navy or a different branch?

NT: I don't know. Hindsight is twenty-twenty. I probably wouldn't have done the Marines. I went to the Navy because I was like, "Man all I will have to do is play my horn." But I've talked to two different cross-rates, one came from the Marines and the other one came from the Army, and both of them told me, "If I didn't have to write a test, I would be at least an E-5 if not an E-6 right now." So, I think the best thing to do and what you're kind of doing right now, is look up the advancement system for each service and figure out what can you do the best. If you can write a test really well, then join the Navy. You can take this for what it's worth, I'm dysgraphic, dyslexic, and ADD and I was told I'd never graduate from high school. So, I made a lot of B's in college, a few A's, and a couple C's. The point is, the dean of the music department told me one time, he said, "In music, you will always be going up against your peers. Always." It's no difference. In this case it's for advance... Well, if I can't take a test, then I just need to come to the realization that I don't have a career in the Navy. Well what can I do? If I had joined the Army, it would have been different. If I had joined the Marines? Hell yeah. I'd be doing great. I'm a decent player. I can handle responsibility well. I run operations.

PR: I just want to cover one last school of conversation that we haven't covered. What kind of daily life do you do in the Navy band? I mean obviously you have PT most days of the week and things like that but what I mean is, what is an average day that you have? How much military stuff do you do as opposed to musical stuff? Things like that.

NT: We're in the Navy board. We're not in the military. I mean most of our job is rehearsing.

PR: You said that you ran operations and so I thought maybe you spend a lot of time in your office to work on it because I've worked in operations in the Army so I understand that it can be a time consuming thing sometimes.

NT: Yes, I've spent all day today doing it. Luckily, we didn't have any rehearsals. You know, a busy band is a happy band. And this is where it dances a fine line. A big band, operations is your job. You don't play. Does that make sense? Because you have so many

gigs and so many things to be accountable for that you don't have time to play. A smaller band like this, it can be a little bit different, where a guy in operations is a piano player for our combo. So, what do you do? You don't have a choice. So, if the combo plays then he plays, but they don't rehearse much.

PR: So, you don't do a lot of rehearsing once you get to the point where you are running something in a small group like this?

NT: No.

PR: So, the operations people in the large bands, they're musicians but they don't really play because they don't have time to?

NT: Yes, so the deal is the Navy bands are completely self-sufficient. We don't have other rates running our band. We can handle everything. When we travel, we have a travel guy that handles it. We have a guy that handles all of our files and records. And we have a guy that runs the admin[istration] paperwork of the band. So, with the bands in the Navy, one way we can justify our jobs is that we are completely self-sufficient.

PR: The army does that too except the whole band contributes. If you're an E-4 you still practice but you're also going to work a shop. So that it lessens the work that [the person in charge of the shop] has to do because you're running the group but you can at least hand off the busy work to someone else to do.

NT: Exactly. Same basic thing just different bands.

PR: That's the big thing. I'm trying to compare so a person can have a true look at what you get if you join this branch as opposed to this branch. There are advantages and disadvantages to all of them...

NT: Exactly. And before I forget, and you're going to think this is funny, but I was told today by [the head of our music department] that within the next two months we're going to start using the Army's program for running ops.

PR: The computer program?

NT: Yes.

PR: Well, I guess if you look at something that's being done better somewhere else and you can incorporate it into your own group, then that's good.

NT: Exactly....

PR: You don't carry any weapons or get issued any weapons or anything do you?

NT: No, well I do but it's usually on the base and it's a bow and I'm shooting at a pig.  
So, that doesn't really count.

PR: I think that's everything. I appreciate your time.

NT: No problem.

*Air Force Regional Band Tuba Player Phone Interview, 9 June 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): Overall what I want to do is cover the various audition processes and entry level things that you have to go through to be in the Air Force and the Air Force Bands. And in the second half, I want to know the military and musical responsibilities that you have as a tuba player. So, let's start with the audition processes and go from there. What did you have to do for the audition when there was an opening? [I've always been under the impression that] the Air Force isn't like the other branches. What I mean is that in the Air Force each band is a lot like a professional civilian group, where you audition for that specific group. You don't audition for the Air Force [in general] per say? Is that correct?

Air Force Tuba Player (AFT): You're right. You audition for the band. The band posts an opening and it's for that band and unlike the army...or the Navy where you audition for the Navy Band Program or the Army Band Program, with the Air Force, you audition specifically for a band. Sometimes it's down to a specific group that they have in mind for you. That more applies to a trombone or a trumpet, where they're hiring a lead trumpet player versus a classical one. But as far as the tuba is concerned, it is for the band. I would say also, I joined the Air Force... and back then, the audition process was not standardized. Somebody got smart and they finally said, "Ok, this is what we're wanting to do." So, this is what you can expect at every band....Now if you go on any Air Force Band's web site or even the Air Force Band Program's web site, you can click on an instrument and get the audition's requirements....

PR: So, basically do you send in an audio recording first and then get a call back like you would do in a major group in the civilian world?

AFT: That's correct. It's screening process first and the purpose of that is just to eliminate a lot of the people that don't belong there. Personally I have mixed views on this. I would prefer just a "cattle call" audition much the way the Marine Band does it. But, we do a screening process and out of that process there may be ten or eleven tapes or CDs and they'll invite five or six. And maybe three or four show up. That's how it works. What you need to stress is that the tape round is actually very important. The reason I don't like that process is because I used to work auditions and it's interesting to me that sometimes you'll have a great player who doesn't have a very good tape and you're not expecting anything. Then they show up and they play; you might like them anyways because you like their resume. Then they show up and are amazing. Or, the opposite is true. We've heard just amazing tapes and the person will get there and you learn the recording is just so highly edited that that's not a realistic view. So that's why I prefer the whole notion of a "cattle call" audition the way the Marine Band does it.

PR: There is definitively a feeling in the college world that you have to edit what you're doing....there can't be blemishes on your tape so everyone seems to edit their stuff nowadays and that has become a problem.... There's a difference between doing minor tweaks and completely re-editing everything that you do.

AFT: Right.

PR: So, what goes on a normal tape? I'm looking at the web site and I can see the audition requirements but what goes on the tape?

AFT: I think what's important is to have two contrasting etudes. So you want to show something technical and something lyrical. On top of that you might have a standard excerpt of some sort. It really could be anything that is standard like Stars and Stripes. It could be the 1812 for band. I think bottom line is two contrasting etudes.

PR: So, your audition sounds a lot more like a civilian world audition.

AFT: Yes. Exactly.<sup>386</sup>

PR: So, once you get the job what happens next? Do you have to go to the whole processing station, do the physicals, and go to basic training and all that stuff?

AFT: Correct. Yeah. So, you have to first qualify for the band. I want to note this as well. The band field is very small so if you just show up at a recruiter...we've heard these horror stories where some high school kid might be a great musician, knows nothing about the Air Force, goes to the recruiter and the recruiter says, "Great. I can get you into the band but let's join the Air Force first." That's completely wrong. I just want to stress that if you want to join an Air Force band, if you qualify, if you're guaranteed a position, then you take that to the recruiter. There is a certain form. It has a number on it....Then you take that to the recruiter. Only then should you join the Air Force.

PR: Do you require a head shot or something just to know that the person has the physical characteristics of somebody who would be qualified to be in the military?...

AFT: Do you know the name Tim Buzzbee?

PR: Yes.

AFT: He showed up at an audition.... I think he was a student at East Texas. He shows up and is unbelievable, head and shoulders above everybody else, just an amazing player. Unfortunately he was about 60 pounds overweight at that time. Now since then, he's become a fitness guru, a marathon runner. So, he's just the model of fitness now. So, had he been lighter, he would have been an Air Force band member. So, to answer your question, we screen the people on the phone. We politely tell them that there's a height/weight restriction for military service. Do you meet this? How tall are you? Then you can weigh whatever. Then you go to MEPS, which is a Military Entry Processing Station. Then they'll do various physical tests on you and ask you questions and things like that.

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<sup>386</sup> The most recent Air Force regional band audition was in January 2012. It asked for three short recordings. Once invited to the live audition, the first round included two minutes of a solo of choice, four band excerpts, one orchestral excerpt, and sight-reading. The second round was more band and orchestral excerpts plus playing in the section. The final round was playing and sight-reading with the brass quintet and the Dixieland band.

PR: Then once you sign all the contract stuff, you're pretty much in at that point?

AFT: That's pretty much it. You then go through basic training. When I went through it was six weeks. It's eight weeks now in the Air Force. So, it's a little bit longer.

PR: Do you have opportunities to play while you're at basic training?

AFT: Oh, no. The only playing that you would do, in the Air Force, it's called the Drum and Bugle Flight. So, essentially you're playing, as a tuba player, one of those old bell front GG contras. The reason that they have the Drum and Bugle Flight is to provide music for the graduation ceremonies. So, instead of doing KP duty, serving food and things like that, the band members is part of this Drum and Bugle Flight.

PR: So, you are playing but it's not exactly desirable playing.

AFT: No. It's not at all desirable. When they told me that, I was like, "Oh a drum and bugle corps. That sounds great." It's nothing like that. Sure you're playing. It almost sounds like...when I tell people this they say, "Oh, so that means you can practice?" No, you kind of show up, put a mouthpiece in, blow a couple notes, and you start playing the music. So, it's still very much the military and very regimented. When you're in basic training, every minute of the day is accounted for pretty much.

PR: So, you get through basic training. It's a pain in the butt but you get through it. Then what happens after that? Do you get sent right to your band?

AFT: Yep. So, here's the good part about the Air Force band program. It's a direct duty assignment, meaning that let's say you joined the Air Force as an F-16 mechanic.<sup>387</sup> You go through basic training. Then they will send you to some specialty school to learn your job. Then you would join the real world active Air Force. There are only a couple of direct duty assignments in the Air Force and the band is one of them.

PR: So, how do you get any of the different types of training? Is it on the job training?

AFT: On the job training, yes. In the Air Force, we have different skill levels associated with your rank....so when you go through basic training you're considered a 3 level. I don't really know why because you don't really learn anything. And then once you get into you're band, you do 5 level upgrade training. That's where you learn lots of stuff.

PR: Is that associated with your enlistment level? So, you go to basic training as an E-3 and you become an E-5 there or what?

AFT: No. Sorry. It's a 3, 5, 7, 9 level. That's not associated with the E-5 or whatever. In the Air Force, if you have a certain number of college credits or a college graduate, you'll

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<sup>387</sup> An F-16 is a type of Air Force jet aircraft.



be an E-3<sup>388</sup> when you get out and then after it's 28 months until you put on your next rank, and then after that it's purely by test.

PR: I've been told...that promotion is not very fast in the Air Force. Would you agree?

AFT: It's not very fast at all....I was an E-5 on my fourth year anniversary and I made it fairly quickly. In my 10<sup>th</sup> year, I made E-6 and that's what I am now so, yeah, it's not fast but the over-whelming upside is the quality of life in the Air Force compared to the other bands, only from what I've heard. The quality of life more than makes up for the slow rank.

PR: Is there any.... The Navy has a setup that is Navy-wide that if you don't reach a certain rank by a certain time then you're kind of pushed out of the Navy even if it's before your 20 year retirement age comes up. Do they have that in the Air Force?

AFT: No. We do not. That's true. In fact, when I was at [my last duty station], at the band ...there, we had trumpet auditions and one of the candidates, she was in the Navy band in San Diego, and on tape it sounded as if she had it all going on. But she said she was actually in danger of being kicked out and that's why she was looking at the Air Force. So, you have to put on the E-5 and then you're retirement eligible. If you're E-4 and don't get promoted to E-5, which in the Air Force is Staff Sergeant, you top out at the ten years.<sup>389</sup>

PR: Getting back to the advantages, what are some of the ensembles that you play in? What does a typical Air Force band have? Concert band? Brass quintet?

AFT: Sure. Yep. The tuba player definitely would be in a concert band. There's always a ceremonial marching band, which really isn't a marching band; it is a stand and play. So it's better to call it a ceremonial band. Parades are so few and far between that they really aren't worth mentioning.

PR: So, you don't really do many ceremonies, change of command ceremonies, which is a very common thing in the other services?

AFT: We do those but often times it falls to the brass quintet. If it's something big, if it's like a major command, that's always the full blown ceremonial.

PR: But it doesn't have marching really involved, you said?

AFT: It's pretty much just stand and play. Another group certain bands will have is a Dixieland band. Brass quintet as I mentioned. Here...we have a group that's...essentially a double brass quintet with a percussionist and a vocalist.

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<sup>388</sup> This is a reference to the pay and ranking system that the entire military uses. There are ten enlisted pay grades (E-0 through E-10) and 10 officer ranks (O-1 through O-10). There is a chart for this and it can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>389</sup> This refers to being promoted to the pay grade of E-5 (Staff Sergeant) from the pay grade of E-4 (senior Airman). For more information refer to the sections in Appendix A on Rank and/or Pay Grade.

PR: Kind of like the Youngblood-type of group?<sup>390</sup>

AFT: Yeah. Exactly... It really lends itself to a lot of different styles of music. We have some very creative writers in the band. It's not their Air Force specialty but they'll do it on the side. They'll just arrange pieces and bring them in. And the tuba players for those poppy type tunes, I have an amp and I'll put a mic on my horn. So, I become like a bass guitar. And I'll do walking bass lines and things like that.

PR: Are you the only tuba player there?

AFT: Yes. That's the other thing you need to know. The Air Force, I think it was in 2007, every band went through a 25% cut in manning. So, most of the regional bands which were 60 pieces, dropped down to 40 pieces. And, of course you have got to get that from somewhere, so the two tubas, normally we had two tubas in the 60 member band, we now have one tuba. Certain bands will have two. And that's by design. Maybe they'll be a married couple and they try to keep the people together so they'll take the tuba as an overage. But the plan right now is one tuba per band.<sup>391</sup>

PR: That brings up a couple questions, what happens when you decide you want to retire? Will they hire a person before you retire or will they just not have a tuba player until they get somebody?

AFT: If there's a projected opening then they can hire against that. But in the mean time what we're doing in the Air Force is a lot of manning assist. It's kind of unfortunate what they did because they cut the bands to save money, but what they created was a whole need for people to now go TDY<sup>392</sup> to augment the band so in other words like every time we have a concert band tour. We used to just go on a tour. Now it's a big production we have to bring in people from other bands so now this money saving initiative really has caused an unintended consequence and we often have to bring people in so that we can do our job.

PR: Is it a lot of people in the Air Force or do you get civilian people from the area or what?

AFT: The way it works is we do Air Force people first. They throw out the net so to speak and see who's available. If there's nobody available then we can hire civilians.

PR: You must end up playing constantly if you are the only tuba player there. It sounds as if you have about four groups that require you to play in...maybe five.

AFT: Right. You would think that. When we're playing, I'm doing the gig. The truth of the matter is when you get to a band in the Air Force; all Air Force bands are self-

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<sup>390</sup> This refers to a group known as the Youngblood Brass Band.

<sup>391</sup> Since this interview, even more cuts have been made to the Air Force band program. Two bands have been deactivated and two others were reduced to 15 musicians.

<sup>392</sup> This stands for temporary duty. It basically is the money that is given to a military person by the unit to travel and work in a place away from the base he/she is stationed. These fees include gas, lodging, flight costs, food, and any other legitimate work or travel expense while on the trip.

sufficient. So, I tell people this is sort of like a music business. I'm a tuba player but if I started a concert band let's say, well then somebody has got to buy the shoes, somebody has to book the gigs, somebody has to wash the cars. You know what I mean. There are all those jobs like in the Army. So, we do all those in house. We have a computer specialist, media people. We have operations. I book the gigs for [the brass band group at the band]. So, you could say that almost half my job is admin.

PR: Is that the case no matter what rank you are?

AFT: It's more true the higher you get in rank. When you come in...it's maybe 80% playing and 20% admin. But then as you go up in rank it becomes more admin heavy. And that's just the nature of rank. With rank comes responsibility. You have to supervise people. You have to run shops and things like that.

PR: So, you end up having less time to practice. But that makes sense because at that point you know a lot of the stuff that you're playing so it's old hat. You can spend more time doing other stuff.

AFT: Right. Still I can easily practice three hours a day...during the day and still do my job. So, I used to work for [my previous civilian job] and my worst day here is better than my best day there.

PR: Do you have to do any Air Force related activities? Beyond your shops, do you have Air Force-type military responsibilities that you have to maintain too...? I mean all the other branches have too...like the Marines and the Army, they have weapons qualifications type stuff going on, training exercises that you have to go to, a class here and a class there where you learn to drive a military vehicle or something like that. Do you have to do anything like that?

AFT: A little bit yes. The weapons qualifications happen in basic training and you really don't have to touch it again until you're going to deploy. The Air Force started sending bands over to the desert.<sup>393</sup> I was actually on a Navy ship in 2009. I went on a humanitarian thing on a Navy hospital ship called "Continuing Promise." So in order to do that, I had to re-qualify on the M-16.<sup>394</sup> But other than that, physical fitness is the big one in the Air Force. I can tell you for a fact that a percussionist lost her job because she failed a PT test six times.<sup>395</sup>

PR: Do you do daily physical fitness to maintain that or is it just on your own?

AFT: In most bands it's on your own. You're given the time during the day. We have a schedule, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday that we are released at a certain time and you do what you need to do. Some bands are a little more organized and they'll actually have

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<sup>393</sup> Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

<sup>394</sup> An M-16 is one of the US military's primary rifles. Re-qualifying means that the musician needed to go to a rifle range and shoot enough targets with the M-16 to be considered qualified. Some branches require their musicians to re-qualify annually while others only require it when it is needed because of their mission.

<sup>395</sup> PT stands for Physical Training. See Appendix A for a definition of PT

a group fitness thing. But they really make everything available to you in order for you to pass that.

PR: You said something about deploying. Does the whole band deploy or is it just a small section of it gets sent for a month somewhere? Do you spend an extended time in the dessert?

AFT: No. It's group driven. So, you got to think to yourself. What do most people want to hear over there? I mean they're kids. They want to hear the rock band, right? So, it's usually the rock bands that get deployed.

PR: Does it come down from above that they want to send you or does the rock band kind of say, "I think it would be nice if we went over there?"

AFT: It's determined really at the Pentagon level. It's a rotation. So they know in advance, who's going to go or which group is going to go. This group, [our brass band], actually went over to the dessert. Their role was a little bit different. It was not so much playing for the troops. It was playing for the, sort of, government officials of the countries we were in...kind of pave the way through the arts. That actually proved to be very effective.

PR: Is it tour based where you create sort of a month long tour and then you come back? How is that set up?

AFT: It was sixty days. Now, I'm pretty much sure that tours are 180 days. Now, if you're keeping up with the news, the military is also pulling out of these countries. So, my personal belief is that all this is going to come to an end.

PR: Right. It'll definitely draw back. I don't know if we'll ever completely leave those countries.

AFT: Right. But at least you...see the way this started in the Air Force was we were trying to make ourselves relevant. I guess the key phrase is that everybody has to bring something to the fight. So, the band leadership felt that we're going to bring community relations, outreach, you know, feel good about America thing. We're going to country for the troops and [as public relations] to the various countries. You know, it's very intimidating when they see these soldiers and you march into a country and these people are staring at you armed to the teeth. But if they send the band in and they start interacting...well you know. It's a whole different...

PR: We did a training exercise when I was stationed in Germany where the whole Army did an exercise in Poland and we were sent over there to play music to kind of say, sorry for ruining you farmland.

AFT: Exactly, so you know what I'm talking about.

PR: So, then how much time do you spend away from home? I mean not just on deployments like that but in general. Do you do a lot of touring or is it a lot of on base musical opportunities?

AFT: Every band is a little different but generally in the Air Force, you can safely say about one week every other month you're on a TDY. TDY is through your area of responsibility. You probably already know this, but every band has a region that we cover. Like down in Texas, it is Texas, Louisiana, Arizona, and New Mexico. So we try to book tours through that. Now that doesn't mean that we can't go out of that, because you can. But generally, that's your area of responsibility.

PR: ...So, it sounds to me like you do far more public relations things than you do ceremonial performing.

AFT: Yes, In the Air Force, that's a true statement. Again, in San Antonio, Texas, there's an Army Band<sup>396</sup>, and the Army Band was the opposite. They're pure ceremonial. They didn't tour, you know. We toured. They didn't tour.

PR: Yeah. In the Army, most of your public relations gigs might be things like doing a parade in a nearby town during their town festival.

AFT: Yep. That's what we found to be true for the Fort Sam Band.<sup>397</sup>

PR: You came from Texas? Were you required to transfer or is it kind of voluntary? Because all the other branches you only spend a few years in a band before you're sent somewhere else.

AFT: Yeah. That's a great question. In the Air Force, it kind of goes back to your original questions about auditions, you know, you're hired for a specific band. Most of the tuba players, we never moved...unless you volunteered to go to Germany or Japan or Alaska, you didn't move.... Somebody, I'm not sure where this was, at a higher level, started looking at the bands and said, "Hey, why don't these band people move?" So somebody started, and this is a brand new initiative. They want to start to move people every six to ten years now. I was prepared to stay twenty years that's what I wanted to do. They said you can go to [one of two bases] and I chose [where I'm at now]. So, since we're all one deep, there's only one tuba player that means it was a trade. So, I came from Texas and the guy from here took my job. We just swapped.

PR: It's going to be interesting to see how that plays out in the long run if there are only one tuba player in every band.

AFT: ...Again that's somebody trying to shake up the system. What happens is there are unintended consequences, you know. I mean they're trying to save money but it probably cost the government \$25,000 to move me. So, you know, where's the savings?!

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<sup>396</sup> The Army band is stationed at Fort Sam Houston near San Antonio, TX.

<sup>397</sup> Fort Sam Houston Band in San Antonio, Texas.

PR: That stuff makes sense in the real military [where lives can be on the line and getting too close to the people you share a foxhole with can be a bad thing] but the reasons for making people move don't really make sense in the band field.

AFT: Right. That's exactly right.

PR: You mentioned that the Air Force was forced to cut 25% of its members. Is there any trends going on towards expanding or contracting? Because, I know for a long time, there wasn't a tuba opening. I was shocked when I saw the opening with the Mid-American Band.

AFT: You know what? We were all shocked because there's still an overage in the field so even the rest of us who were in the Air Force were shaking our heads.<sup>398</sup> But to answer your question, there are only rumors. There are rumors of them going back to the sixty piece band. There are rumors of combining a lot of the bands into what are called super bands. I mean it's all hearsay now.

PR: Is it like having two bands, one on each coast, one's responsible for each half of the United States and it's twice as big as the band that currently exists there or something?

AFT: Exactly. Yeah. There's somebody, somewhere, trying to drive that concept. But I'll probably be long gone before anything like that happens.

PR: Yeah. It probably takes a while to implement things like that.

AFT: Something you should know, I don't know that you know this or not but, some of these special bands, like the Air Force Academy Band, lost its [premier status]...It is now considered a field band.

PR: I didn't know that. I knew there was talk of stuff like that. I hadn't heard anything official. I just talked to a Navy guy about the Naval Academy Band and he said although they had been knocked down they're still technically a premiere band. The way he labeled it, they weren't allowed anyone above E-6 or something like that but they were still technically a premiere band. So, I didn't know the Air Force Academy Band had that happen to them.

AFT: That's exactly true about the Navy, what he told you. In the Air Force, the members there are trying to do the same thing there. They are very protective of that status. They were fighting it tooth and nail. They were trying to come up with some sort of compromise where they would retain their status maybe through audition or something like that. But right now, it's considered a regional band.

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<sup>398</sup> An overage in the military is when there is more of one job than that job is supposed to have but since most branches can't or won't force their enlisted to get out before their twentieth year, the military is forced to wait for the people in those positions to either leave on their own or retire after their twenty years are up. In this case, since the band had to cut 25% of its personnel, if it had, for example, 30 tuba players before and now it has only allowed 15, then they will have an overage until they have 15 or less tuba players.

PR: That's interesting. See that's exactly what I'm talking about by trends. It's amazing how much the military band system is changing right now.

AFT: Yes it is. Big time.

PR: The Air Force is so much different. I'm sure that you have to play The Air Force Song and things like that, but do you have any Air Force specific things that become a staple of your literature that it might be useful for someone to learn before they come and join the Air Force?

AFT: I would learn Stars and Stripes. Without a question that's the one thing you're going to play for sure.

PR: I was looking at your audition [requirements], you list sight-reading...related to that, is it useful to be able to play changes, bass line changes and all that beforehand?

AFT: It's not required but I can tell you for sure that it's good to know. And there are a couple reasons for it. I mentioned before that there's a Dixieland band, some of the stuff that we play in the Dixieland band is all written out and sometimes you're reading off of a lead sheet. So I would say it's a great skill to have. I wouldn't say that it's required but...

PR: We were talking about the Air Force Academy Band. Are you encouraged if there is a premiere band opening in say D.C., to take that audition or is it, you're kind of where you're at and that's where you're at.

AFT: No, here's the good thing. Promotion from within is encouraged. I mean it's paid for. It's TDY too. So I remember taking...you've probably taken a lot of auditions too. You have to take days off work. You spend thousands of dollars. I've taken premiere band auditions while I've been in the Air Force and it's a TDY.<sup>399</sup> So yeah, it's encouraged and completely paid for.

PR: The nice thing is you still get all the advantages to being in any of the branches of the military without all the negatives of being in some of the other branches....We've pointed out a ton of advantages to being in the Air Force, but is there anything that the Air Force could do better, that you maybe see in a different branch that they do better? Or even that you don't see in a different branch that you could see really improve the day to day life of a bandmen in the Air Force, especially a tuba player. It's a tough question, very general and broad.

AFT: Right. No, I really can't complain because the budgets are good. I mean two years ago, I was able to buy two brand new tubas of my choice.

PR: Of course you don't really get to keep them once you retire though.

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<sup>399</sup> The Air Force pays for the travel, hotel and food for the trip. Furthermore, TDY's are considered work days the individual does not lose vacation days either.

AFT: No, you don't but the good thing is if and when you move, you can take those with you. So they can follow you. I have a Mienl Weston 2000 and that followed me here. I couldn't really say there's a downside. You do have to like physical fitness. You have to want to stay in shape. You can't be a couch potato. But musicians, tuba players in general, we're always striving. We're always trying to be better. We almost never see somebody in the band who's a "slacker."

PR: Even physical fitness, as long as you're willing to spend an hour a day or something like that...that's not really something that will throw someone off unless they just have a complete hatred of anything physical.

AFT: Right. Exactly. But it's that notion of, and I'm sure you've seen this in the Army, they're happy to do it until somebody tells them they have to do it and then they don't want to do it. You know what I mean? It's a guy who would work out anyway but now that it's mandatory, it's something to [complain] about. So I don't have any problems. I love the benefits. Pay is good. The one thing I wish the Air Force did verses the other services is the special pay.

PR: Are you're talking about cost of living type pay and all that?

AFT: Well I have friends in the Air Force who are maybe computer guys and they'll get these outrageous re-enlistment bonuses, like 60 grand. And musicians, I mean everybody in the bands in all these different branches, tend to be very educated. Most of them have masters and doctorates and there's no special pay or bonus for us.

PR: Other than the initial rank you are given, that's the only extra pay you get throughout your career.

AFT: In the Air Force. Exactly. There was one time where I think they were offering bonuses for trumpet players because they were having hard time...but now...that's the only thing I would like to see changed is coming in at a higher rank and having bonuses. But I can't complain. I make pretty good money for playing the tuba so I really can't complain.

PR: Well in the grand scheme of things, that's a minor thing to need. All things considered with the advantages.

AFT: Exactly. It's really very selfish for me to even say that with people being shot at.

PR: Well, that's not even what I mean though. With all the benefits that you have, playing and job stability and playing with such good musicians and not having to do some of the stuff that you have to do in some of the other branches. I mean they're getting an \$8,000 bonus but they're not doing nearly the stuff that you're doing musically. And with the education that a person normally comes into the Air Force with, you end up coming into the Air Force that you still make up some of the money that people don't have when they come into a different branch.

AFT: Exactly. Very well put.



PR: I think that pretty much covers it. Is there anything that you can think of that we haven't covered? ...Because what I'm trying to do is ultimately give an impression that best represents what it's like to be in the Air Force. So, I guess this is your chance in case there is anything I've missed.

AFT: Ok. Well just a couple remarks. With the level of musicianship in the Air Force is very high.

PR: The average person has a bachelor's degree or higher?

AFT: Yes. And the overall level of playing is very high. It's such a pleasure to work with these people. I can't think of anything else.

PR: We've covered a lot here. So that's probably a good thing....I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me. I know how busy a person can be in the military sometimes. So I greatly appreciate that....

AFT: No problem. Thank you very much.

*The Air Force Band Phone Interview, 6 July 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): The final document is meant to give information to what the audition process is like. So, even though the questions are geared to what your personal experiences were like, if you can contribute to what is done now, that might be more relevant.

Air Force Band Tuba Player (PAFT): Yeah, I figured because I have my own stories of when I auditioned for this particular group, and the process is vastly different as far as how things are run today. You know, treating the customer so to speak and managing their time and getting them prepared. So, it's vastly different.

PR: Well, what was your first musical experience like?

PAFT: Well, I do believe we had to send in a tape for a pre-screening process. The tape was accepted and we were invited to come audition in Washington D.C.

PR: How many people were invited?

PAFT: I think there were 37 tuba players in one big room. And this was for one position. We had this one room to warm up in and doodle around in or whatever and they said we're going to have the audition. So, we just lined up. There was no set order. You just got in a line in the hallway and you just waited. One person went into the room at a time because that is what the facility could hold and there were two people listening. One was there listening and the other one was there with you as an on-site proctor saying "Ok, do this piece, do this piece," showing me the music, where to start and where to stop. And then you left. Then it went down to eight people. Then it went down to three people. Then they picked a winner.

PR: So, there were four different rounds?

PAFT: With the tape round, if you consider that the first round then yes. There were three rounds on the day of the audition.

PR: That must have been unfortunate if you were one of the last people auditioning because then you'd have to just sit around and listen. Could you play?

PAFT: That's the thing. If you got out of line or paid somebody to say, keep my place in line, it was a little odd I thought just standing there. I wasn't the first one or...you know. I was in the middle of the pack somewhere. And you know, you get cold. You got your horn with you. I didn't think it was...it was just interesting. So nowadays, people are either pre-screened, depending on the committee and what they want. They will want a pre-screen round basically with MP3s or a CD sent in...and a resume, and if they are

found to be musically qualified in that pre-screen round, then they need to go to a recruiter and get pre-screened to make sure that they are eligible to enlist.

PR: So, first they send in a tape and if you like the tape, then they go and see a recruiter. Then they come to the audition?

PAFT: Yes. We do tell them not to sign anything at the recruiter's office. Don't raise your hand.

PR: That would be unfortunate.<sup>400</sup>

PAFT: So, once they have been totally qualified then they are invited to come to a live audition. And we set up those people in time blocks now so that you know that you're in the time block between say 8:00 and 9:00 even before you show up. Or you are between 10:00 and 11:00. So, that you arrive an hour before your time block and you sign in. We weigh people. You have to make your weight at the audition day. You have to be below the maximum allowable weight. Then after each time block, we release people. So, say ten or twelve people are listened to; we release those that did not advance. So, say you don't advance, your time in the building is, say you were at the 8:00 time. You were maybe there at 7:00 in the morning. You'd be done by 9:30 or 10:00. So, it's a very short time frame. You're not there and everybody signs in at 8:00 in the morning and you don't play until 4:00 in the afternoon kind of thing. You're not waiting around.

PR: Yeah, you'd blow your chops because you're nervous and you can't stop playing.

PAFT: Exactly. I think it's better time management for the customer.

PR: So, the way it's done is different but what is done is pretty much the same now?

PAFT: What is done now is that we provide a repertoire list online that is downloadable. So, you get an actual table of contents for the repertoire and/or what is going to be expected on the audition day. We also designate what is going to be expected for the pre-screen tape if that is what is required.

PR: Is that all that is on the audition? What's on the list?

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<sup>400</sup> If you were to sign a contract and enlist with the recruiter before the audition and then you were not selected to the band, you would still be obligated to enlist however you would probably not be able to play in any band unless it was fortunate timing and one of the regional bands had an opening. That band would also have to like you. If any of that didn't happen then you would likely have a job completely unrelated to music within the Air Force. So it is vital for those auditioning to not sign anything until officially winning the position he/she is auditioning for.

PAFT: That and sight-reading. And the list can be connected with a solo, either of choice or a designated solo, and then excerpts and then there could very possibly be ensemble playing, meaning a duet, a trio, a quartet, a quintet.

PR: As things narrow down?

PAFT: Right. And some of that might be part of the sight-reading because we do ask for sight-reading. Now when I auditioned, I cannot remember, they may have said to prepare a solo like Hindemith or Vaughan Williams because those are the biggies. Then they would ask whatever part of those they wanted to hear. Now as far as giving out a repertoire list, I don't remember them providing a repertoire list. We were on our own. You had to just know, "Ok these are the warhorse pieces that I need to know." You know, your Oberon's, your Die Meistersinger if they wanted to put that on there. They would make a mix and match of orchestra and band excerpts and the sight-reading. So, you really had to know your stuff. Now we're providing everything.

PR: And a lot of tuba players don't know that list.

PAFT: For the band repertoire?

PR: Yeah, everyone thinks of the stuff that they play in college and most people don't play Oberon when they are in college anymore, unfortunately.

PAFT: Correct. You pick pieces like that because if they have the technical and musical aptitude to perform the particular piece, then they should be able to do anything like the Holst's Chaconne from the First Suite, that's a gimme, the Lincolnshire Posy, Rufford Park Poachers, stuff like that... And all kinds of marches, you need to be prepared on marches. In addition, know the differences of how to perform stylistically the difference between a 2/4 march and a 6/8 march. How do you treat the dotted quarter? Stuff like that. I mean, I'm a real stickler for rhythms and time and musicality.

PR: Well, as a tuba player if you don't have good time...it's kind of an important thing.

PAFT: Exactly. But getting back to the process, now if there is somebody found that is qualified to play at the level that we require then they are offered the position. Then they'll go to a recruiter and enlist and they set them up with basic training. They report directly to our unit after basic training. There is no technical school to go to in our branch. So, they put them in the drum and bugle corps at basic training. That's considered to be keeping up with musical talents or skill set.

PR: I've heard that is less than fun to do.

PAFT: Yeah, and if you're a vocalist, then you're given a pair of cymbals to crash or learn to play bugle or something. So, it's totally different but, I'm sure, a totally refreshing experience. When I got in I didn't do that. I went straight into a regular flight. We had options. There were options to go into the drum and bugle corps because the [drum and bugle corps] was there to provide the musical support for the parades and the retreats ceremonies at basic training. In fact, they were not actually recruiting when I was down there in basic. And I went to ask about it, because I was told prior to it that they will come around and ask if anyone had played trombone in high school because they're looking for recruiting for that particular flight even though those people are still in basic themselves. They act in a dual way. But nobody came around and there were two of us at the time coming to the D.C. band. So, we went and searched them out and said what's going on? And they said, "Well, you fell right in the middle of a recruiting segment and unless you want to lose four days of training, it's just not the time to do it." And we said, "No thanks." Any day going backwards at basic training is not a good idea.

PR: So, they actually kind of recruit you at basic training? I didn't expect that. I was expecting that they basically just expected you to do it.

PAFT: Not when I went. No.

PR: I wonder if it's the same since the Air Force has been hiring at a much slower rate for bandmen lately.

PAFT: All I know is now any bandmen or any musician that has a position in either a premier or regional band, when they go to basic training, they are put in the drum and bugle corps. A flight is 50 people or so and there are not 50 musicians out there for each flight. So, they still do recruit I'm sure to fill that flight out.<sup>401</sup>

PR: We've gotten a little off topic. So, how much say does a person have on say, the solo and excerpts? Do they have to play scales?

PAFT: Not for my unit. It depends on...we have had commanders in the past that have required that but no we do not require scales.

PR: That seems to be something that is falling away a little bit and there is more weight being put on sight-reading. Is that happening in your band too?

PAFT: I think the overall product is what we are looking for. We are looking for someone, tuba or otherwise, that presents a good musical overall package, which includes having good pitch, intonation, steady time, correct rhythms, proper articulations, proper

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<sup>401</sup> This is most likely through recruiting people that are not actually enlisting as a musician but have prior musical experience that can be drawn on.

musical appropriateness, you know, the tempos that people take. Some people think, because they are in an audition, they need to play it very rigid or very straight so that it is a perfect note. Then there is no music in that. So, that doesn't get many high marks. You know it can be a perfect note but if it's not inspiring, like music is supposed to be, then I wouldn't hire that person. And sight-reading is part of it. That can weed people out. And we also, for some of the instruments, and tuba would be one of them, we require a part like a sixteen bar memorized march, and they march them around with a snare drummer basically to see if they can march and play at the same time and not fall on themselves, because we do chair and ceremonial work from time to time. You know, if it's a ceremonial brass opening or it's a concert band opening they require marching because we're all part of that ceremonial work when they need the big ninety-nine piece band or when we have multiple jobs, multiple missions going on we need bodies to cover those missions.

PR: How much say does the person have in what they're playing. Can they pick their own solo? Do you pick the excerpts?

PAFT: It depends. If it's a solo of your choice than they'll pick something but normally the committee will have copies of all the music so they can watch as they play. It could be a designated solo. I'm trying to think back to the last tuba audition we had to fill if we had a choice of piece. There might not have been a solo at all. Sometimes it also depends on what round. Sometimes that first round, there is two ways of thinking about it. You play the solo so you can get something that you are comfortable with and feel out the room. And it gives us a chance to hear them play something that they really own. Then maybe they go into a few excerpts and maybe a sight-reading piece. And I say maybe because they are told that they may be playing up to say four excerpts, which means at anytime. If the committee is hearing something that they've heard enough of either because they know the guy or girl can do it or maybe they've heard enough because they don't want that kind of sound or that kind of player, then they'll cut them off. We don't need to hear anymore. So, it's either good or bad that you're cut off after only two excerpts.

PR: So, don't get discouraged by it is what you're saying.

PAFT: Correct. And we actually brief them on that too. We just say, "You'll be asked to play up to so many excerpts." And it's possible that they'll be asked for sight-reading at that point. And they'll say, "Ok, skip to number four and then we'll do some excerpts." It's all up to the committee but we do post the first round prior to the audition. So, going in, people will have their music ready. We also post the second round as far as the repertoire. I should be clearer about that. We post the first round so they can have their music ready. We post the second round as far as repertoire. The final round is not posted.

Anything is fair game. And going back to what you asked, they don't get a lot of wiggle room.

PR: Well, they at least have the music in advance.

PAFT: They have music in advance. They know what's to be played in the order that it's asked for.

PR: Once they get accepted then they have to go to the MEPS and go through all of the MEPS processing and basic training...

PAFT: Correct. We get them through the Pentagon. Well first of all, they sign a form and the job is offered to them by an officer in the band, a commissioned officer. And they get this form that is basically a place holder. It's our promise to them that we are holding a position open for them in our particular band. And we only audition people for our band. That being said, at times there have been, say regional band members, the audition member from that particular band, maybe they're looking for their own trumpet player. And they may come and listen in our audition. And if by some chance we pick the number one person because that's who we want, and say number two strikes a chord with whoever else is listening back there from a different band, they may offer a position in their band or at least invite them to come audition for their band.

PR: So, there might be more people in the room listening to auditions than...

PAFT: There might be. It doesn't happen very often. A lot of that is driven by mission because people aren't always available to come out. They often can't take the time to do that. So, if we have a recommendation, if we find that there is more than one person qualified, meaning that they have made the standard or exceed the standard or we know it is going to create an opening...I mean we have some people from within our branch in a regional band. Regional band members are allowed to, depending on their time on station, aloud to audition for premier band openings. I mean we have several people who have come from a regional band that are members of the premier band here in D.C. By the way, there is only one premier band [in the United States Air Force] now.

PR: Yeah, I've heard that in various other interviews.

PAFT: Those were decisions made above my pay grade. But anyways, so if somebody makes it that is already in a regional band and they make it into the D.C. band, that then creates an opening in that regional band. So, if there was somebody that came in, say, second in our audition and we felt that they were strong players, we could recommend them for that band. Then if they take our recommendation that they are qualified, they may just offer them a position. And that is good on them for doing that.

PR: Exactly because that might actually help their band out.

PAFT: Exactly. I mean if they were neck and neck with the winner on our end that would definitely pretty much qualify them for a position with their band. Now regional bands have a little bit different requirements because they need to have a multiple talent base as far as a skill set goes. We're more specialized. We have six specialized ensembles. Whereas in the regional band, there are some people that are specialized, they play all concert band but then they break up and play in the jazz band or part of them makes a brass quintet or a Dixieland band or something like that, but they splinter using the same people all of the time.

PR: So, after basic training, do you have kind of a transitional period in the Air Force Band? A lot of the other bands talk about how they learn the different marching and the rest of the differences that the bands do that the rest of the military doesn't do. Does your band have some kind of set up like that where there is, say, a month of training?

PAFT: Well, not really. I mean any new member has to go through in-processing. That's where they're getting their uniforms. They're going through all the different military agencies to make sure that their pay is correct, they moved so they make sure all of their belongings are taken care of in their move, they go find housing.

PR: That seems to happen for all new members. I guess what I mean is musically; some of the other branches don't have as extensive training for their members.

PAFT: You mean the Armed Forces School of Music in Norfolk, Virginia? Yeah, we don't do that.

PR: What I meant was, for example, the Marines don't have to go to basic training at all. So, they go right to their band but they still have to be able to march like a Marine. So, they end up spending a month learning marching techniques, especially since military bands have different maneuvers than the regular enlisted, or at least the Army and Marine bands march different, I haven't seen an Air Force band marching. The turns are different and stuff like that in ceremonies.

PAFT: You are taught those if you are in the ceremonial group, the Ceremonial Brass. Like I said there are six performing units and that is one of them. And people assigned to Ceremonial Brass. People are assigned to the Strolling Strings. People are assigned to the Singing Sergeants, the Airmen of Note, the Concert Band, Max Impact is our rock band,

PR: So, if I counted right, there are three groups that have tuba players in them.

PAFT: Yes. Well, actually no. Just the Ceremonial Brass and the Concert Band have tuba players in them.



PR: And then they break down into a smaller group like a brass quintet?

PAFT: Yeah, each group has its own set of brass quintets. It's whatever we can make up manpower-wise that we can do. It's not always the same group of people in those quintets. I mean we like to have continuity, yes with two or three of those quintets. But if they need a quintet for a promotion ceremony then we will take who's available for that job and put them together if everyone else is on other missions... But getting back, we go to basic training, we learn all those moves in basic training, and then we get to our band, the premier band, there's a little training and you're basically not in your own group for about two weeks time. But you sit down and you are on the job basically. You know, your first rehearsal, you're on the gig. There's no musical training or "This is how we do this." You learn on the... You're doing it right there.

PR: On the job training.

PAFT: That's right. That's the level we need to hire at.

PR: Ok. So, there are basically two types of groups that have tuba players. When a person gets accepted, do they know whether they are going to be in the ceremonial band or the concert band?

PAFT: Yes they do, because the audition is for a particular group but the repertoire can be virtually the same. Say it's a ceremonial brass opening; they're not going to expect you to stand around with a B flat sousaphone and playing marches all day long. That's not all they're listening for. They're listening for the same musical quality as a musician that is in the concert band. It's equal as far as that level.

PR: Is there much Dixieland or jazz that a tuba player might find themselves playing?

PAFT: Only if they need to put a group together like that.

PR: So, it's mainly classical music relatively speaking, or classical band music, classical marches.

PAFT: Yes. They will use a tuba player probably 99.9% of the time for when we form an orchestra with the strolling strings and the other woodwinds.

PR: So, the ceremonial band and the concert band are completely separate groups? I mean sometimes they might come together and work together but most of the time they're separate.

PAFT: Correct. Or we'll swap people depending on what the mission requires. And we only swap them for those jobs. It's not like, "Well, now you're a member of such and such group."...I've played with Ceremonial Brass. I've played with the Orchestra. I've

played with the Airmen of Note. I've played with Strolling Strings. I've played with the singers. You play everywhere and you have options to play in the chamber series and play your own music, solos, quintets, whatever.

PR: So, I would imagine that if you're in the ceremonial band, you do less public relations types of things and when you're in the concert band you do a lot of public relations concerts?

PAFT: Yes. That would be correct.

PR: Though I guess they could do some parades and things like that.

PAFT: They're actually setting up some sort of tour for them this year. I'm not quite sure how it's going to work....Each commander brings on a different vision and this is a different vision that that group will tour. They do public relations. Over the last Fourth of July weekend, they were up at the Yankees-Mets game and played the National Anthem. They did the Today Show so it's ceremonial but it's also community relations.... We were just given the privilege to be the start off band for the Macy's Day Parade in 2012. How cool is that? Now that's public relations but it's a marching band and it's going to be combined with everybody who can march and play an instrument like we do for inaugural parades and state funerals.

PR: How many tubas players do you guys have anyways?

PAFT: In the Concert Band, we now only have two and they are slotted for three or four in the Ceremonial Brass....

PR: So, you are pretty busy? I know some of the other premier bands have told me they have enough tuba players, that they only play around half of the concerts because they are able to...

PAFT: Right. They can rotate their people. No we're doing everything. If somebody gets sick or they go to school, we have a lot of professional military education that people go through their careers and that takes somebody out for say six weeks, we'll borrow somebody from Ceremonial Brass to fill in.

PR: So in order to get promoted, a person has to go to those schools. Is that why they do the military schools?

PAFT: Well, sometimes the promotion has happened even before they've gone to one of these schools. It depends on where they are in their career. But they are mandatory throughout your career to attend depending on where you are in your career.

PR: We kind of talked earlier about how before you do an audition you need to make sure that you meet the standards, the body image standards and things like that. Even in your daily life, do you do physical fitness and do you have annual or semi-annual tests and body fat count and stuff like that?

PAFT: There is a very strict fitness test that we do in the Air Force...and it is a bi-annually or semi-annually test. Though depending on your score, if you get a 90 or above, then you only have to take the test once a year.

PR: So, there is some incentive to really work hard on it.

PAFT: That's right and we are big on appearance because we are in the public eye, those cameras are on us. We represent everybody else in the Air Force, and we're out in the public. People listen to us with their eyes or at least that's what we call it.

PR: A lot of people don't know the difference between what sounds good and what doesn't sound good but they can see really easily.

PAFT: They see and if they see somebody that really looks like they are pressing their uniform from the inside, that's not good and people have been removed for a period of time from performing because of what their appearance is.

PR: Is physical fitness left to the individual?

PAFT: Yes it is and if somebody does not pass their fitness test then they are put on a certain program that is a monitored program to get them so that they can pass within a certain amount of time. And you have to pass that test. And that affects your annual performance report which then affects your eligibility for promotion.

PR: Does promotion happen relatively slowly? I know it does in the regular Air Force, compared to other branches.

PAFT: Well, our promotion system in the Air Force Band is a closed promotion system, which means we compete against available stripes within our unit. So, it is only based on people who retire or separate, then that slot opens up. So, we only have, say, so many E-9 slots. So, that dictates how many E-8, E-7, and E-6 slots we have. So, there's a ripple effect if, say, an E-9 retires. That opens a 9 stripe, an 8 stripe, and a 7 stripe.

PR: The next question is kind of a general question and I'm sure it probably changes from year to year but do you spend a significant amount of time away from home on tour?

PAFT: In the concert band that is called ComRel tours, that is Community Relations tours, we have been doing two three week tours. So, that's about six weeks on the road at

two different times of the year, like maybe in the Fall and in the Spring. And then we'll also do run outs to various music conferences. So, that can be maybe two-three days or we're out and back in a day or two day thing. If you add it all up it could be about two months.

PR: Out of the year? That's a pretty good chunk of time every year to be traveling.

PAFT: I guess so but it is broken up. We don't do it like the Marine Band does, where they go out for like a month and a half at once and that's it. Then they'll go to Chicago for like a Mid-west conference. Those are the conferences I am talking about.

PR: Is it the type of thing that you look forward to or is it, "I have a family. I wish I didn't have to leave?"

PAFT: It depends on the situation. I mean, I love to travel and it's just part of the job. I love it.

PR: Do you have any Air Force specific songs? I know you have *Aim High*. The reason I mention this is because I know for a fact that when I was in the Army, there were a couple of marches that I had never heard of before I got into the Army like *American Soldier March* was one I had to play that I had never even heard of before I got in there and I played it almost every day. And even now, I can't ever find a recording of it and I've never seen it outside of the Army.

PAFT: Why did you play it? What was the reason that you played that song?

PR: It was just a march that I played in ceremonies all the time. There was no specific reason. It wasn't like the army song or anything like that. It wasn't a Sousa march or anything like that, but it was definitely a published march and I have never seen outside of the Army.

PAFT: Was it used to move troops into formation?

PR: We would play it in the ending portion of the ceremony. If we played a Change of Command ceremony, it got played in the mix with other songs...

PAFT: Did every other post band play that song?

PR: There was no regulations. It was just part of the repertoire you had to learn. It's kind of interesting. I mean every post kind of has its own...I mean the First Cavalry Division has a First Cavalry Division March and every division has its own little march. So, with the First Cavalry Division, it was Custer's, and he liked the song "Gary Owen." So, we always played *Gary Owen March* in that band just because that was the tradition of his band. So, each unit has its own music that it plays.

PAFT: That's very interesting. I wouldn't say that we do that but for say, Pentagon arrivals or White House arrivals, there would be certain music that is played to march the honor guard into place and it's virtually the same entrance and exit music. Like on a Pentagon ceremony, we would have our pre-concert ceremony which would include this one march that was written by one of our own in house arrangers and it's been copyrighted and everything. Or they could bring them on with this one march called *Trombone's Triumphant*. It's a 6/8 march. So, it's a nice gate, easy march. We always end with *Queen City* as a recessional march. That's just part of the formula. When they do funerals at Arlington Cemetery they will pick certain marches on the march to the grave site. They'll pick music that the Ceremonial Brass either has memorized or will have the music with them. We do have an opener that we play for our concert band openers. We start out without our commander, no conductor up front. Then there's an announcement made of who's conducting, blah, blah, blah and then they walk on and we finish this opener. So, in essence, yes, we have sets of music that we use, depending on who's conducting and what they choose.

PR: Would it be useful for a tuba player to learn that music before they get to the band?

PAFT: No. If you can't play that on site, then there is something wrong. Let me give you my experience. When I got in the band, I went to basic training, got in the band around March 21 and I was on tour April 4<sup>th</sup>. I actually played a concert within the first week of arriving on the base.... And then we went on tour. So, it was less than two weeks and I'm on the road and I'm seeing music like this opener stuff; the stuff that you play like *National Emblem* to get the colors on. Then you play the *National Anthem*. Then you play *Grand Old Flag* to get the colors off. Those are ceremonial aspects of every concert. I had never seen any of that stuff. I mean I knew *National Emblem March* but I'm sight-reading this stuff. I'm sight-reading the Air Force Song and the Armed Forces Medley that we play for all the different services. I'm sight-reading now on our concerts because those are head charts. That's why when you get these jobs, in the auditions you need to show that you can do this stuff.

PR: Do you have any non-musical responsibilities/ administrative responsibilities?

PAFT: Yes. Everybody in the band has, what we call, collateral-type duties. And throughout your career you don't keep your same duty all the time. You learn in one area and then you broaden yourself into different areas. Say you are a supply rep. for the concert band. You would be the one that the clarinet players would come to when they need to make reed orders and that goes to the supply guys. I mean, we have a separate supply function. Everyone, by the way, is a musician in the band. So, even though they may be full time supply, that person has either played in the band before or is a musician that can play in whatever unit that they are needed until we meet the manning...

PR: Ok that is useful to know. I didn't know that was the case before I started this process. I know the active duty bands all had collateral duties, but I didn't know about the premier bands.

PAFT: Each of the premier bands handles things like that differently. Some of the premier bands have a full time staff, like a full time library staff, a full time supply staff. We have our own audio engineer but they will have a full crew. You know the box movers that help sets up and tears down the equipment. We all do that from within. All of our musicians are on crew and they end up playing the concerts too.

PR: Is there anything else that you do because of the particular premier band that you're in that you wouldn't do if you were in a different band?

PAFT: I know the Army doesn't require as much collateral duty. I mean, they are musicians. They come in and play the rehearsals or their ceremonies or their concerts or whatever missions that they have, and that I know of, they do not have a collateral duty. I mean some people do take on other duties as needed but that is managed in a different way. The Navy Band I think is starting to do more collateral duties beyond their playing...

PR: We briefly mentioned that the Academy Band is no longer a premier band. Have you noticed any trends like that, maybe down-sizing your band or perhaps is your band getting kind of pressured to use less money and be more frugal?

PAFT: All the time. That's an ongoing fight as far as budget and man power. In 2006, we were hit hard by what we called PDD 720. I can't remember what that acronym means but the chief of staff of the Air Force at that time...we were going through a huge manning depletion. They needed to have a drawdown of like 40,000 airmen. That was across that board and they looked at the bands and [they all] got basically a 25% cut in their manning which is a huge cut. Then they never gave us any tools to make the cut. Some of the tools that were used in the regular Air Force, say you were a maintainer in that particular, I'll use your terms, MOS...

PR: Haha. What term does the Air Force use?

PAFT: AFSC. Air Force Specialty Code. I'm a Premier Bandsman and that specialty code is different than a regional bandsman.... But the tools, we were not given the tools like the other airmen like cross training or like say you were a maintainer and wanted to be a dental hygienist because they needed dental hygienists or something. You could cross train and do that so the maintainers would maybe get down in their numbers but maybe they have needs in different areas like linguists and stuff like that. Well, for us to draw down, we were given no tools, so it was through attrition that we've been able to

get down to our numbers. Attrition means some people retire or separate and we did not hire. We had a hiring freeze for two years. So, we had to make do with what we had.

PR: How do you make up for the loss in musicians? Do you hire civilians to supplement when you need to or do you get other Air Force service members?

PAFT: We either do that or we can go out to the regional bands and ask for a manning assist request. And that happens throughout. Say the band at Travis [Air Force Base] is doing a recording session and they want to bump up their tuba section, they may ask for a manning assist request and request somebody to go out there.

PR: Did that create problems in the ensemble's personnel? Maybe too many trumpet players were retiring but you couldn't hire anyone so you didn't have enough of that particular instrument.

PAFT: It did cause some issues that way, yes but then we started hiring back in the end of 2008. The auditions started opening up because we had critical positions needing to be filled and some of those positions were trumpet and trombone at the time.

PR: That's really interesting. It's amazing how they look to the band for these cuts. I mean I was talking to a different bandmen in a different interview and he said the amount of money it takes to run his branches' band program is less the cost of one cruise missile. And that is what they want to focus on to cut in the budget.

PAFT: Somebody did some calculations with the money. What they want to cut would support our band for 50 years. It's a drop in the bucket.

PR: It's a matter of looking at the little things so that you can avoid looking at the things you really should look at in the budget.

PAFT: Of course. We all know that.

PR: Do you get to work with other bands?

PAFT: Rarely but we have had occasions where we've hired an oboe player or a harpist or somebody that is from a different band. Well, not hired them but we asked them to come play and we fund them to come and play. We've gotten people from the Army Band. We had somebody come in from the Navy Band or the Navy Academy Band if we need them.

PR: Is there anything that we've missed that sets the Air Force Band apart from the other military bands?

PAFT: On a whole, we are what everyone sees. We are the front line of the Air Force. You probably get that from the Army and stuff like that. When we are in the public, this maybe their only personal connection, you know because they hear about the war and they see it on TV and they hear about it on the radio and they read it in the newspapers. Or they know somebody that has somebody deployed. Say we're out there in whatever park, we are representing the Air Force.

PR: You can't get deployed, can you?

PAFT: All the Air Force bands, all the regional bands and the premier band are on a circuit or a cycle depending on which band is supposed to go out to the area of responsibility, the AOR. So, we do deploy.

PR: When you get deployed, are your responsibilities similar to what a regional band's might be?

PAFT: Yes. I mean they perform whatever ceremonial duties that they are needed out where they're deployed. They do, for a lack of a better word, community relations, troop morale, it's all there like diplomatic missions.

PR: The reason I didn't ask that question earlier was because it never came to mind. I ask it to all the regional bands. I just assumed that the premier bands didn't have to deal with that.

PAFT: Oh no. We have sent our rock band. We've sent a Celtic group and these are people that formed up on their own. You know they happened to be in one unit by themselves. They were a part of say, the singers and they got together and formed their own Celtic group which include two violins, a tin flute, a Bodhran drum, electric guitar, and an acoustic guitar and somebody may have played on a strumming thing. They were deployed. They go into hospitals. They go into FOBs, Forward Operating Bases. They go to embassies and stuff.

PR: So, they were like, "Good job. We're glad you came up with this group on your own. Way to show the initiative. Let's send you to Iraq."

PAFT: Well yeah, but you know the troops out there, they tend to want either hip hop, country, or rock n' roll. The Airmen of Note went on a...it was a deployment called Operation Season's Greetings and they took BeBe Winans with them and the Gatlin Brothers. You know it's like what Bob Hope did with the USO-type bands.

PR: So, the whole band doesn't deploy, just sections of the band?



PAFT: This particular one, yes because you have to be light and lean as far as traveling. I would not say the concert band as a whole would ever get deployed.

PR: That brings up two different questions then. How does that affect the rest of the band that doesn't get deployed? If you lose your first flute and you're first two violins, if the Celtic group gets sent, then how does the band make up for that? Do they do like you were saying before, constantly try to bring in people to supplement?

PAFT: Well, the Celtic group all came out of the Singing Sergeants. They have a fabulous violinist within the Singing Sergeants and they all learned their own instruments and were good on it on their own and stuff. So, that group was affected by losing four members of that particular unit out of a sixteen member group. So, they weren't at full up with their singing ability.

PR: But there are other groups like the rock band. I'm assuming the guitar player also plays in the jazz band for example.

PAFT: No. We have specific units that are fully manned. We don't crossover and double up.

PR: Oh. It's just so different. It's a different world than all the other bands that have everyone doing everything.

PAFT: Exactly. That's why I say we're specialists. We're going to have a baritone saxophone opening in the concert band because somebody is retiring. They're going to listen to [the people auditioning] on the legit music and they'll also see if they can swing a little bit too because they play sax quartet music. They have that ability. It is also possible that they may ask them to sub in the Airmen of Note if needed because there is that sax player in the Airmen of Note. If that person goes down they will need to fill that position somehow to keep it running.

PR: So, even though you could get asked as a bari-sax player to play in the Airmen of Note, your primary duties won't include that.

PAFT: Correct. My primary duty is with [the Concert Band or the Ceremonial Brass]. That is my assignment. And even the Sax player [in the Concert Band] may be asked to be marching or have the ability to march in a ceremony or a parade. I mean we pull from everybody and every band does this if they don't have enough real musicians playing the real instruments that they play. We hulled in one guy that was at the time an administrative guy. This was back when we didn't have musicians doing all those administrative duties. We actually had people in those administrative positions but we gave him a trumpet. We said, "Hey, here's a trumpet. You're marching a trumpet." This

is a funny story and I do have to tell it. The day of the inaugural parade, they put everyone through magnetometers at security to check them out and they were asking people, we were walking through with our instruments and most times they would ask us to play something to show that the instrument was playable and there is nothing stuffed up in there kind of thing. Well, this guy was seeing all this and he was scared to death that he was going to have to make a sound on the trumpet. The guy in front of him went through and did whatever he had to do and he kind of stayed around and watched as the next guy came through and said, "Yeah, he's good." And the security guy believed him when he vouched for him and he didn't have to play a peep. He was so scared. Something you haven't asked, we also maintain a secret security clearance. They start that process, I believe, when you enlist.

PR: I had to get a clearance, but it wasn't as high as your clearance that I'm sure you had to do. I think it went back seven years and it was a pain.

PAFT: Oh yeah. We had to go back ten years originally. Well, we have a lot of operational security that we have to deal with considering who our customer is.

PR: Getting back to deployments because all these questions that I was going to avoid when it comes to deployments, this has gotten me to think about. When you deploy, do you have to do any military training, firing weapons and things like that.

PAFT: There is training that is required for anybody that deploys and that is everyone has to be weapons trained and there is another type of training, I can't remember what it is called but you have to go off to where they are having the training for like two to four weeks training and it's hand to hand and you learn about self aid-buddy care like for real. We do that training annually anyway as part of our regular training.

PR: You don't get issued weapons in your daily life do you?

PAFT: No. Would you trust a tuba player with a weapon?

PR: I had one. Haha.

PAFT: No. We are not issued weapons unless you go into deployments and we only are given weapons there for your own protection.

PR: So, whether you are deployed or not, you go through a minimal amount of training even though you probably won't ever actually need to use any of it.

PAFT: Yes, but once we go through basic training which has weapon training in it, we don't weapon train throughout [the rest of our career] at all unless you're deployed.

PR: You do other types of training though?

PAFT: Other types of training that are annually or bi-annually, that includes: self aid-buddy care, LOWAC, don't ask-don't tell training, trafficking of persons, human relations, you know all kinds of different training like counter-intelligence. It's all computer training.

PR: So, some of the training has a military side to it but it's not really hardcore military training or anything like that.

PAFT: No. You're not out there doing hand to hand combat training and stuff like that, no.... And that kind of goes along with the PMEs, our professional military education,<sup>402</sup> that comes along with your career.

PR: Well, I think that covers everything. I appreciate all of your time.

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<sup>402</sup> All military service members must attend certain classes annually or semi-annually on various topics such as sexual harassment and counter-intelligence.

*The Army Field Band Phone Interview, 6 July 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): Basically, there are two overall questions that I want to cover. I want to find out about the audition process for the Field Band and I want to look into what your individual responsibilities are [as a musician] in the Field Band as opposed to some other band like a base band or one of the other premier bands. So, we'll start with the audition process. Could you go through what all you went through in the audition? What were your audition experiences like?

Army Field Band Tuba Player (FBT): I had taken six premier band auditions. I started taking auditions in my sophomore year of college... The only thing that I had ever wanted to do was be in one of the premier bands. It didn't matter which one, just one of them in the D.C. area. So, I started right away and there were a lot of openings. I think I did two auditions for the Air Force, two for the Marine Band, I think I did one for the Army Band "Pershing's Own," and then I also did two for the Field Band. So, I'll focus on the two I did for the Field Band. The first one I took, I played well but they didn't take anyone in that audition. They invited me back to take the audition a second time and that's when I won. The actual audition process started with how I found out about the job. [My instructor] had all these tuba openings posted outside of his door on a bulletin board. This was before all the websites that now post everything. So to prepare, there was a big band excerpt book that [my instructor] had that we just set up and read through a couple things every day in our practice sessions and we got them all down and that kind of stuff. So, I was pretty well versed in all the band lit. before the audition started but the actual tape...they had me send in a tape or CD.

PR: So, you did have to send in a tape then?

FBT: Yes. There is not a "cattle call" for the Field Band. They are going to weed all the tapes down to about eight to twelve tapes. All they asked for was about three band excerpts and two solos of contrasting styles. I think my tape was around ten minutes long. Let me think about what was on that tape. I think I put a march like *Thunder and Blazes*, I think I put the Barnes *Third Symphony* tuba solo in the very first movement, and then I put *J'ai été au Bal* by Grantham. So, I did those three excerpts and I also did the cadenza for the third movement of the Hindemith *Sonata* and I did the First Fury<sup>403</sup> by James Grant. So, that is what my tape consisted of.

PR: Was that all music that you chose to play or was that music given to you as music you had to put on the tape?

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<sup>403</sup> The first movement of *Three Furies* by James Grant.

FBT: It was my choice. So, I figured that I would put a march on there that would show how technical I could play. Then I put a slow solo on, which was the *Third Symphony* to show how lyrical I could play and how well I could phrase. Then I put *J'ai été au Bal* to show that I could play a jazzy kind of line in a different style. That is the reason I picked those. So, I picked all of those myself...Now do you want me to go over the actual audition?

PR: Right.

FBT: So, they invited I think about eight of us out to fly to D.C. What they do is, they pay for your flight, they pay for your hotel, they give you food money, they do all of that stuff. They set you up in a hotel and they pick you up at the hotel on the government dime. They take you to Fort Meade<sup>404</sup> and you audition in the concert band hall. There happened to be three rounds in the audition that I won. In the first round, I think they basically had us play prepared excerpts that we knew about. I think there was about twelve of them and they asked for maybe six of them or something like that. They were all really well known stuff. Then they will throw some excerpt in there that you really haven't seen before but it usually either has crazy time or a crazy key signature just to see if you can fake your way through it if you know what I'm saying.

PR: Right. Yeah.

FBT: So, then they asked everyone the same solo which I think was the cadenza from the Hindemith *Sonata [for Tuba and Piano]*. Something I had already put on the tape. Then there was a solo of your choice on top of that for the first round. So, that was the first round.

PR: Then they accepted something like two or three people to the next round?

FBT: Yeah. Three people went on to the second round.

PR: Was that round kind of the same thing? More excerpts?

FBT: Exactly. More excerpts. Not the same ones by any means. It was different excerpts. There was more sight-reading and more solo stuff.

PR: So, you had to play another solo in the next round also?

FBT: Right.

PR: So, there is nothing like scales involved.

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<sup>404</sup> Fort Meade, MD.

FBT: No scales for the Field Band. I did the other services, Army Band, Marine Band, and I've never been asked scales before.

PR: It seems that the premier bands have stopped doing that. Even the active duty base bands seem to be getting away from that but some of the branches still require that.

FBT: Oh. I see.

PR: Do you ever do any ensemble playing in the audition?

FBT: In my audition, I did not do any ensemble playing like with a brass quintet or anything like that. I didn't play with the band or any of that.

PR: Is that the same way that it is now? I mean, I know the band has been pretty stable for a while now but are auditions pretty much handled the same way nowadays as it was when you auditioned?

FBT: Absolutely.

PR: So, you still have people send in a tape and everything like you had to do?

FBT: Yes.

PR: Okay. I know that has changed in some of the other bands and I wasn't sure. I interviewed a couple of people that said that they were basically forced to do the "cattle call" thing for legal reasons.

FBT: Oh. I understand.

PR: So, once you won the audition, did you have to do all of the things that anyone joining the Army, for whatever job, would do? You had to do the physical, go to MEPS,<sup>405</sup> and basic training, and all of that stuff?

FBT: That's exactly right. It's no different. We still have to be a certain weight or body fat and that other stuff that you have to pass. Basically, it's no different. You have to be eligible to enter the Army to be in the band.

PR: Since after basic training you don't go to Norfolk, Virginia for Advance Training,<sup>406</sup> what do you do to get up to speed on things like Change of Command ceremonies and other procedures that are part of day to day life in the Field Band?

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<sup>405</sup> See Appendix A for definition.

<sup>406</sup> This is for Advanced Individual Training, otherwise known as AIT at the Armed Forces School of Music. See Appendix A for more information.

FBT: That is something you kind of learn as you go. First of all, with the Field Band...recently we have not done ceremonies like that. The “Pershing’s Own” will do ceremonies like that but here the brass quintet will do a little bit of those ceremonies, maybe five a year on average. That should give you a rough idea of how often we do stuff like that. It’s not like we are out there marching with our instruments. So, if we are doing a Change of Command [Ceremony], for example, we are doing one tomorrow, so basically the quintet will show up and set up their equipment. Then they will play some pre-music, the National Anthem, and stuff like that. As far as military protocol and stuff like that? It isn’t something that you really have to rehearse to make sure that you are squared away. You just kind of know after doing it for a while.

PR: I must have some misconceptions about the Field Band. It sounds like you don’t hardly do any ceremonies and the ceremonies that you do, don’t involve marching or anything like that at all.

FBT: Yeah, we march for the Inaugural [Parade] every four years, but besides that it is very rare when we actually march. In the past ten years, I may have marched maybe ten times total. It’s mainly concert playing.

PR: That was a complete misconception on my own part.

FBT: Yeah. The Army Field Band is not a good name for the band. It sounds like we are in the field.

PR: Exactly. I always thought your band was almost entirely marching.

AFT: We march way less than “Pershing’s Own” that’s for sure.

PR: You must do a lot of traveling and public relations-type performances then.

FBT: The mission of our band is to travel. We are on the road probably a hundred days a year. We do roughly around a forty day fall tour and a forty day spring tour. Then we maybe do a twenty day summer tour. In between we do things like Christmas concerts. We do some summer concerts at Fort Meade for the people at Fort Meade like an 1812 concert.<sup>407</sup> But basically, we are doing thirty-five concerts on a forty day tour.

PR: With all of that traveling, is that hard on the band? I’m sure it’s different from person to person but does that put a strain on the personnel of the band?

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<sup>407</sup> The interviewer did not request for clarification on what exactly an “1812 concert” was. In the moment, it was assumed to be a Fourth of July performance that included a performance of the *1812 Overture* by Piotr Ilich Tchaikovsky but whether this is truly what was meant is not clear.

FBT: Right. I would say that the retention rate for the Field Band is different than the retention rate for say the "Pershing's Own" just for that reason. A lot of the females that get in obviously want to have families. So, a lot of them get out. But travel like that often is a strength. It is definitely a sacrifice but on the other hand, it's a great job to have with a great bunch of people to play with. I'm married and it is definitely not easy at all. But especially in this day and age the retention rate...no body's retiring in this day and age. Especially in the past two or three years, people are just not getting out.

PR: So, it's mainly a function of the times as to why so many people are staying in or do you find that if say the economy got better and more jobs in the civilian world started opening up, then maybe the retention rate might be a little lower?

FBT: Right. I would say that if the economy were a little bit better, then there might be more openings than there is now. Compared to when I first got into the band, it has definitely slowed up.

PR: How is the band divided up musically? Is it set up so that you have a concert band and all the other groups are structured out from that band?

FBT: With the Field Band, we have four basic main components. There is the Concert Band. We have the Soldier's Chorus, a thirty piece mixed chorus. We have the Jazz Ambassadors, our jazz band. Then there is a rock band called the Volunteers. I think we have about a hundred and fifty people total in the unit. I think that's how it breaks down. Within the Concert Band, we have three brass quintets, two or three woodwind quintets, a sax quartet, horn quartet, trombone quartet, two or three clarinet quartets, percussion ensemble, and other stuff like that. So as for these smaller groups, I would say that it is mostly from the concert band. I think our jazz group has a Dixieland band that they send out once and a while but most of the [chamber] ensembles are from the Concert Band.

PR: How many tubas is the band allotted?

FBT: The Field Band has always been three tubas. I think generally with the premier bands it is to have four tubas, but with the Field Band it has always been three.

PR: That has to be a little taxing then. I mean if there is only three and you have three brass quintets. So, each one of you has to be in a brass quintet and you are all traveling at the same time. If you're on tour how does that affect the other personnel? Do you end up swapping around a lot and filling in for other people because they are on tour with a different group and things like that?

FBT: That has happened before. It doesn't happen very often. Especially with the trumpet players, if something happens to the first trumpet part... So, let's say for example we are



on the road and we happen to be doing some ceremony stuff and we committed to it three months ago but now one guy has a crazy cold or something like that. Well, the trumpet players are all good players that they can do one rehearsal with the quintet and then go do it. It's really not that big of a deal.

PR: So, for the most part then, if the Concert Band is playing, then you have to be there. You can't do a rotational system at all.

FBT: That's correct. If we have a concert then we are not going to be doing a brass quintet ceremony or something like that. We are going to schedule all of that stuff around our concerts.

PR: Some things need to take precedence over the others.

FBT: Right. On our tours we have designated school days and that is the main reason that we have our small ensembles. It's a day off from playing the concert. So, what we do is go to local universities and high schools and stuff and just do clinics and master classes and stuff. So, that is the main reason that we have our small ensembles. They are for our Educational Outreach Program.<sup>408</sup>

PR: As a tuba player, are most of your concerts with the Concert Band?

FBT: That is correct, yes. I would say maybe 95% are. I mean with my quintet, we might do around five master classes and clinics a tour and maybe ten or fifteen a year.

PR: Does that affect the way auditions happen? I mean, is there a lot of emphasis on sight-reading as opposed to being able to play, for example, thirty different Sousa marches?

FBT: I think what we are looking for when we are hiring someone is for them to be well rounded in every area. If they can play the heck out of a march but they can't play a slow lyrical etude then they are no good to us. If they can sight-read the John Williams Tuba Concerto and play it well but they can't read a standard band excerpt that they have never seen before then that is no good for us either. So, I wouldn't say that they need to be absolutely amazing at every aspect of playing but they need to be super solid in all aspects of tuba playing.

PR: Would you say that the audition is about 50% sight-reading and 50% prepared music?

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<sup>408</sup> Whether this is directly linked to the Army Educational Outreach Program (AEOP), which according to their website, is "designed to engaged and guide students and teachers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education" or a separate program that the band has for itself, is unclear. "Army Educational Outreach Program," 8 July 2011, accessed 8 July 2011, <http://www.usaeop.com/>.

FBT: Yes.

PR: Let's get back to the responsibilities. Do you typically have any administrative responsibilities? Do you work in a shop at all?

FBT: Everything is in house with the Field Band. You don't have to do anything. They are not going to tell you to do anything whatsoever. But since we have in house promotion, that's going to affect your promotion. We don't go up against the rest of the Army. We only go up against the rest of the people in the Field Band. So, I [have about four collateral duties within the band]. Do I have to do these duties? Absolutely not, but if I want to be in the running for promotions then it is good to have it on your promotion sheet.

PR: And everyone needs to get promoted because the higher your rank the longer you are allowed to stay in the military.

FBT: Right, I actually started as an E-6.<sup>409</sup> You know about that, right? After basic training, we go to the Field Band and 60 days after we are in the Field Band we put on E-6?

PR: Right.

FBT: You can still do twenty years and be an E-6. But if you don't get promoted to E-7 then a few years after that, I don't remember what they exact years are, then yeah you could get booted out but generally in the Field Band everybody knows you are a good player. You're probably going to do around one or two extra duties and that will get you promoted.

PR: I'm assuming that physical training<sup>410</sup> is part of your regular life.

FBT: Yes.

PR: Do you have organized physical training or is it more individual responsibility?

FBT: With the premier bands...If you look at both our band and the "Pershing's Own," we are definitely not organizational with our PT. This is just part of a work day kind of thing. They expect you to do this on your own. If someone doesn't pass the PT test that we have twice a year, then we have a PT staff that has remedial training. Then they have their supervisor who is notified when they are failing. It is a headache. We very rarely have people failing the PT test but if you aren't looking like you are representing the Army well, because that is our job as a public relations unit. Then we might need to call

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<sup>409</sup> See Appendix A for information on rank and pay scale.

<sup>410</sup> See Appendix A for information on physical training, otherwise known as PT.

on someone higher up to say to them, “Hey man, something needs to change.” I don’t want to say that they are very stringent about it but you definitely need to represent the Army well because we are out and about so often.

PR: That makes sense and the image thing in the premier bands is almost as important as the fitness part.

FBT: Right.

PR: Are there any specific pieces of music that might be useful to know before an audition for your band?

FBT: I don’t think so. I mean, there are pieces that were commissioned by the Field Band but none of them are worthy of putting on an audition as an actual excerpt. You have pieces like *American Overture* by Jenkins. We commissioned that. Then there are a couple of Philip Sparke pieces that we commissioned but generally they are pieces that don’t make good excerpts. So, I would probably say no to that.

PR: Is there anything that you do simply because you are in the Army that you wouldn’t do because, let’s say you were in the Navy Band? Or the “Pershing’s Own” Band? Or the Academy Band? Is there anything that separates your band...other than the touring because we’ve already talked about that so much?

FBT: I think we already covered that before. I think we do a lot less marching than the other premier bands. All the bands are so good; I mean as far as musicality, I don’t really see much of a difference. It really is all about who is standing on the podium and what they can get out of the band because everyone is a great player.

PR: We hinted about my next question when we talked about how there haven’t been many openings in your band lately. Are there any trends going on with the band like downsizing?

FBT: No not really. We haven’t cut any slots in the band since I came here. We haven’t added any slots...I think we might have added a slot for a videographer because we’ve been incorporating a lot of multimedia to our concerts and I think the rock band added a lighting technician. So, those slots were added. Besides that, we haven’t gotten rid of any clarinet slots or anything like that. There are no trends that I’m aware of relating to anything like that going on.

PR: I only ask that because of the problems that the Air Force and Naval Academy Bands went through about a year ago with their risk of losing their premier status. I wasn’t sure if the Field Band was dealing with anything like that.

FBT: There has been no pressure in terms of that but in terms of the federal debt and all that kind of stuff, it's always on our minds. Let's put it that way. I don't think any job is secure, especially in the military band system. I think the stability is a little bit less than it was because of the crazy debt that we are going through right now but we have not heard anything from the high-ups about being eliminated or anything like that. I think what our job is, especially being in the top, we justify it public relations-wise because we play for so many people and get so many e-mails saying how their perceptions of the Army changed because of us. So, we have a lot to back up what we do and that makes us a little more comfortable about where we are at. As far as the regular active duty band like you used to be in, yeah, I'd be a little worried.

PR: In a different interview, someone put it this way. They said the military spends about 2 million dollars on the entire band program. That is barely the cost of two Patriot Missiles.

FBT: That's exactly right. We also have an electronic bugler at some General's funeral. Who wants that? If someone's General is being buried, they want a real bugler there. They want a band. You know, there is nothing different about that. Plus it's tradition. Those are people that died fighting for their country. We have to keep some traditions for Pete's sake.

PR: Does the band do any work even if it's simply borrowing personnel, especially if it's with the "Pershing's Own?" Do you swap players when somebody is on maternity leave or anything like that? Does that happen at all?

FBT: In the time that I've been in the band, if somebody couldn't make it on a tour and we absolutely needed them then sometimes we worked around it. But on occasion, like for instance in the saxophone section you obviously need a bari, a tenor, and two altos. So, I think when that happened, we asked "Pershing's Own" if anyone wanted to go on the road for thirty days. It's usually someone who is single and wants to check it out and see what we are all about. But I think that has only happened twice in the past ten years. So, does that happen very often? No. Not whatsoever.

PR: Related to that but going back to the auditions, is it actively encouraged for other active duty players to take the audition? In other words, do you get a lot of active duty trumpet players at your auditions?

FBT: I think a lot of them do apply. Our Colonel is very vocal about giving the current active duty players an edge if they can make it through the taped round because they have definitely paid their dues in the Army and so we should pay special attention to them. I think that is definitely true. Let's put it this way. If there is nothing that separates an

active duty guy and a regular guy right out of a university and we can't decide between the two, then we are probably going to pick the active duty player.

PR: Maybe there weren't any openings when I was in but I never felt encouraged to take those auditions. If this is true, it's nice to see that has changed.

FBT: I don't really know what they do to inform the active duty people about the auditions. I only know how we deal with the active duty applicants.

PR: So, what groups in your band use a tuba? You said there are brass quintets. Is there a tuba-euphonium quartet or anything like a Dixieland band that uses a tuba?

FBT: No. We don't have a tuba-euphonium quartet right now. We discuss it here and there but all of the tuba players are already in a brass quintet and that would just add more to the work load. So, that hasn't really been... But as for anything else like a Dixieland band from the concert band. No. I know there is one from the Jazz Ambassadors. All of our current small ensembles are listed on the website under small ensembles and that is pretty accurate.

PR: Well, that covers all of the questions that I have planned. Thank you for all of your time.

FBT: No problem. Good luck.

*The Marine Drum and Bugle Corps “Commandant’s Own” e-mail correspondence that took place over several months between June 2011 and June 2012. It has been organized into one document.*<sup>411</sup>

Patrick Rettger (PR): What are the differences in audition processes between [your group and] each active duty band as well as the premier bands?

Marine Drum and Bugle Corps Tuba Player (MDCT): For the “Commandant’s Own”? ...none. Individuals interested in the Marine music program audition for a Marine Corps Music Technical Assistant (MTA). Those expressing interest in the Drum & Bugle Corps are often referred to our unit’s designated MTA who specializes in our recruiting efforts.

PR: What military and musical responsibilities are required of the tuba player in each of these bands?

MDCT: Following the adage that “Every Marine is a Rifleman”, all base bands and the “Commandant’s Own” are required to complete basic training, combat infantry training, and all the annual requirements of Marines. This includes, but not limited to: marksmanship, martial arts, swim qualification, gas chamber, physical training and testing, height/weight standards, etc. Musical responsibilities are as set forth by the commands.

PR: What were your first musical experiences like in the military, audition through advanced training?

MDCT: I auditioned for the unit before we had an assigned MTA. I drove to Washington, D.C. since it was in close proximity to where I was living and auditioned with the music instructors for the unit at the time. A brief interview was also conducted with the Commanding Officer at the time. Since our unit is considered a premier unit, our audition requirements are higher than others. All of our Marines report directly to Washington D.C. for OJT<sup>412</sup> for a period of 6 months.

PR: Generally, what is expected in the audition, solo, excerpts, scales, sight-reading, etc.?

MDCT: Prepared piece(s), all major/minor scales, and sight-reading. Again, a higher score is required for acceptance in the Drum and Bugle Corps.

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<sup>411</sup> Since this is a series of e-mail correspondence, some of the responses are not in the order of when they were asked. Based on a response, the author sent follow-up questions. Those questions and responses are presented directly after the original question that prompted the follow-up rather than in the chronological order of the correspondence. The questions and responses are exact quotes with minimal modification to punctuation and wording for proper style and to correspond to with the other interviews.

<sup>412</sup> OJT stands for *on the job training*.

PR: How much say does the person auditioning have on what they are playing in the audition, i.e. do they choose the solo they play or does the person hearing the audition choose?

MDCT: Prepared selections are chosen by the individual. All other materials are provided by the MTA.

PR: Are there multiple rounds or phone auditions?

MDCT: This may be at the discretion of the MTA.

PR: Besides playing, what else might be required during the initial entry into the military? Physical?

MDCT: Yes, through MEPS.<sup>413</sup>

PR: ASVAB?<sup>414</sup>

MDCT: Yes.

PR: Basic training?

MDCT: Yes, Boot Camp and Combat Training.

PR: Is the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps considered a premier group?

MDCT: Yes. We are the only active duty drum and bugle corps in the military today.

PR: Do I understand you about auditions? The Drum and Bugle Corps is a premier group and if you are interested in joining, you need to set up an audition with your group's MTA. Auditions involve a solo, scales, sight-reading, and maybe an interview with the commander. Should a potential tuba player audition before talking to a recruiter?

MDCT: Applicants should talk to an MTA directly, whether they are for Marine Music or for our unit. Both fleet band MTAs as well as regular recruiters should know to point you toward our MTA.

PR: Since the drum corps is a premier group, doesn't everyone come in as an E-6?

MDCT: Negative. We graduate boot camp as E-2 PFCs<sup>415</sup> and earn our promotions as any other Marine.

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<sup>413</sup> See Appendix A for information on MEPS.

<sup>414</sup> See Appendix A for information ASVAB.

PR: How are openings in your group handled? Is there an announcement or do people just need to inquire and if there is an opening, they do an audition?

MDCT: Auditions are continually accepted; however acceptance at the time of audition depends on the needs of the unit at any given time.

PR: It sounds as if auditions are typically on a CC, BB flat, F, or E flat tuba. Is there any playing on the contra during the audition? How do you insure that someone auditioning can play a G horn?<sup>416</sup>

MDCT: Correct. The majority of auditions are on legit horns (not bugles). The probationary 6 month(s) of OJT I had mentioned allows for the Marine to learn the G Bugle as part of the process. Those who fail to do so to standards are processed out to the other fields in the Marine Corps, most likely to the School of Music in Norfolk to be placed in fleet bands.

PR: Is there any talk of switching to BB flat horns like many of the civilian corps are doing?

MDCT: There's always talk. Do I personally see that happening? Absolutely not. What sets us apart from any other bands, brass bands, or civilian drum corps is our traditional 2 valve G bugles. Strictly in my opinion, B flat horns make you a band. That has begun to undermine the core aspects of drum corps and is leading to a wide spectrum of controversial implementation like electronics and amplification. While I personally don't condemn progression or new ideas, our unit takes the stance that we cannot afford to head in the same direction and maintain our uniqueness.

PR: How many contra players is the drum corps billeted? How many perform at a time?

MDCT: We have 6 contras. Depending on the type of commitment or ceremony we use anywhere from 2-6. The drill is written for six, but not all of our performances are drill shows.

PR: Does your group have other smaller groups, BQ, Dixieland band, Ceremony band, Concert band, etc.?

MDCT: No, the size of the ensemble strictly depends on the venue or type of performance.

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<sup>415</sup> See Appendix A for more information on pay grades, ranks, and ratings.

<sup>416</sup> Traditionally drum and bugle corps play on bugles in the key of GG and the tuba is often called a contra which is short for contra-bass bugle. Some modern drum and bugle corps have recently switched from G to BB flat instruments but the "Commandant's Own" is not one of them.



PR: How much of the drum corps's responsibility is ceremonies as opposed to public relations performances?

MDCT: The majority of our performances are ceremonial, varying in type, yet every performance is considered PR or diplomatic.

PR: Have you noticed any trends happening, down-sizing, expanding, faster promotions, etc.?

MDCT: Our numbers fluctuate within about 10 personnel. Trends are minimal. Speed of promotions, like any MOS<sup>417</sup> varies with competition factors like time in grade, time in service, number of marines eligible, and any other factors that affect promotion scores or board selections.

PR: Does a musician typically have military/administrative responsibilities? This includes office work, field exercises, weapons qualifications, and military training classes?

MDCT: Absolutely. Our unit is technically self-sufficient. All of our administrative, operations, supply, public affairs, and command are handled from within our unit. All military training and exercises are handled internally by and large, with the support of the parent command.

PR: Does the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps have any administrative staff? I know that the musicians all have collateral duties but are there any people in your band that are solely administrative, maybe a supply specialist or an operations NCO? Some of the premier bands do and some don't so I'm trying to distinguish the difference...especially since you all travel more than any other premier band. I would think that the traveling requirement can make the need to have assistants more important and make it harder for you to do your collateral duties.

MDCT: Yes. We do have full-time non-performing collateral billets. Actually, right now I am serving in one as the Operations Chief responsible for scheduling, deployment logistics, making liaison with outside entities and day-to-day operational duties. The other full-time billets are Supply Chief, Marketing and Public Affairs Chief, Contracting Chief and Recording Engineer. It wasn't too long ago, maybe 5-6 years ago, that all of our collateral billets were filled by performing members. Actually, a lot are still filled by performing members today. As far as the toll it places on Marines wearing two hats, it's very time consuming. I was actually the Ops Chief back in 2007 as a performing member as well. There were many missed chows, early mornings, and late nights to get the job

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<sup>417</sup> MOS stands for Military Occupational Specialty. It is a code that is different for every job in the Marines. The code is used to distinguish one job from the other.

done. Unlike other Marine units, we are very self-sufficient, but can rely on Headquarters and Service Company for support when needed.

PR: That is what I figured. I mean, based off of my conversations with other premier band players you seem to travel way more than any other group. So, if you're always on the road then I would think that you'd need a non-playing/non-touring administrative staff. I'm actually more surprised that it isn't bigger. Do guys take these positions for the experience when it comes to aiding in promotion? Or perhaps for increased family time? Or something else?

MDCT: We are assigned to these positions based on the needs of the unit. As far as traveling, most of our support staff travels with the unit. It still minimizes our family time, but we've got a bit more flexibility with the schedule.

PR: Can the drum corps be deployed? If so, is it as a musician or riflemen?

MDCT: We have Marines who have served in other units as combat instructors, infantry squad leaders, communications, supply, band field, administration...you name it. Nearly all of them have been deployed in combat, in those capacities of course. Furthermore, we have and will continue to support augmentations for the National Capital Region Task Forces. Our unit has screened and supported each of these missions with at least 2 Marines. They are deployed as riflemen. As every Marine is a rifleman, it is more than an old adage. You will never see a Marine deployed to a combat zone as strictly their MOS. Our unit cannot support combat deployments due to our operational tempo. Furthermore, our combatant mission is Barracks and Capital security. Marine base bands continue to support their parent command's combat missions, usually as HQ security, whether that is in forward operating bases (FOBs) or in the rear echelon. We operate under the mindset like any other MOS or unit. We are riflemen first, then musicians. That is how wars are won. Or, as we often say, "We are Marines who happen to be musicians, not musicians who happen to be Marines."

PR: How much is physical fitness and image/body fat part of a musician's daily life? Do you have group PT or is it personal responsibility to work on?

MDCT: As a high profile unit, fitness and appearance are high priorities and greatly scrutinized. The unit and subordinate sections PT as groups, yet individual PT is ultimately the individual's responsibility.

PR: Approximately, how much time a year does an individual spend away from home?

MDCT: Depending on our operational tempo, the unit can average anywhere from 150-200 days of commitments throughout the world, away from our duty station. We average between 60,000-75,000 miles of travel per year.

PR: What music is specific to your group's repertoire? Would it be helpful to know the music before auditioning?

MDCT: All of our music is memorized. Every selection is either original or arranged for bugles in "G" and battery.

PR: Is there anything that you do because of the branch of the military you're in or the group you play in that you wouldn't have to do if you were in a different branch or group?

MDCT: I can't speak for other branches; however the "President's Own" Marine Band does not complete boot camp or most other annual training requirements.

PR: What are some of the benefits to being in the drum corps?

MDCT: Many of our commitments are high-profile events. The opportunities to travel, meet and perform for dignitaries and head's of state are phenomenal. As a specialized unit, we do not transfer to other commands. The opportunity to establish and set deep roots in the area without transferring every 3-4 years is definitely an added benefit to our military careers as well as those who have families.

PR: Thanks again. I think that's all for now. Hopefully, it covers everything. Take care.

MDCT: No problem. Glad to help.

*The Coast Guard Band Phone Interview, 11 August 2011, Jackson, MS*

Patrick Rettger (PR): My first question is, what your first experience in the military was like? You can tell me your experience but I also want to know generally how is that different than what is done now in the audition process.

Coast Guard Tuba Player (CGT): Are you thinking more specifically with the audition or are you thinking about the experience after the audition.

PR: Well, I want to start with the audition and then go from there.

CGT: I guess going back to my audition in the Coast Guard Band, it was a “cattle call”. We had 52 players. The auditions were spread out over two days. They did the prelims the first day and they did the semi-finals on the first day. Then they did the final round on day two in the morning. It was pretty much the standard band literature that you’re seeing with a lot of the premier band auditions. You had *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*, *Lincolnshire Posey*, Holst’s *First Suite in E Flat* that opening lick, *Toccata Marziale* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and I think Hindemith’s *Symphony in B flat* was in there. So, it was pretty much standard band repertoire with that audition. And it’s interesting to compare that audition to other band auditions that I did because I did do a few other premier band auditions. I did one standard Army audition. For the standard Army audition it was with a traveling group that came [to a local university] and they were just listening to people. That’s the only one I ever experienced like that. I remember that because I didn’t do well at it at all. It was kind of a last minute thing that I found out about and didn’t prepare as well as I could have.

PR: That’s how I got into the Army. A traveling group, like you just described came to my university.

CGT: Yep. I did a couple of them and it’s just...I had a bassoon player telling me that I didn’t play the Vaughan Williams well and it was just kind of really weird audition from my perspective. Not that it was a bad thing. I didn’t prepare for it and I fully take personal responsibility for it but it was just a very unique experience.

PR: It worked out anyways.

CGT: Yeah. I got a job that I love so no complaints there. The other two military band auditions that I can relate to, I did two for the Marine Band “President’s Own” and I did one for the Air Force Band. The Marine Band audition was set up in a very similar style. I made it to the finals of one of the Marine Band auditions. It was a “cattle call” but they got a bigger group. I think traditionally they get a larger group then we do based off of reputation. So, theirs was the “cattle call”, you know, a handful of semi-finals players and

then finals. The ones I did were spread out over two days. And the Air Force audition, they are based out of Bolling Air Force Base<sup>418</sup>...that was a taped round. I think they invited like fifteen players based off of a tape. And a few years later I took the Coast Guard Audition....

PR: So, you had to play a bunch of excerpts. What else did you have to do for the audition?

CGT: Our audition, instead of letting us choose a solo here, they had us play a Kopprasch etude. I don't remember which one, but we didn't get to choose it. I'd have to look through the Kopprasch book to figure out which one but they actually specified what solo you should play. The other thing that we had to do besides excerpts was ensemble playing. At the time, they said that my position was going to be part of the tuba quartet. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, the Coast Guard's tuba quartet was very active. They did a lot of work, not necessarily ceremonial work but they put out a few recordings and such.

PR: Public relations gigs?

CGT: Yeah, there was a lot of that going on. So, they had a whole part to a tuba quartet to learn for the audition. Then we also had sight-reading.

PR: So, you didn't have a lot of say in what you played in the audition. Most of it was picked by the band?

CGT: Yes.

PR: Is it the same way now or have things changed? I know there hasn't been a tuba opening in a while but what about other instruments?

CGT: Yeah, back when we had our latest Euphonium audition, that was 2006-2007. I'm trying to think. It depends on the instrument. I know when they had the latest oboe audition, they made everyone play the Mozart Oboe Concerto but I think it depends on the instrument. It depends on what we're looking for.

PR: Is it still a "cattle call", where anyone can show up?

CGT: Again it depends on the instrument. I know with some instruments they like to screen with a tape round. Personally, I'm a big proponent of the "cattle call". I think that people put on their best in a live audition situation and I think it's harder for somebody to get advanced in a taped round. So, I think with a taped round, it allows the committee to be hyper-critical of the tape.

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<sup>418</sup> Bolling Air Force Base is officially known as Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling and is located in Washington D.C.

PR: There's a lot of pressure on the person sending in the tape to edit things and a lot of other negative things come in to play that way.

CGT: Right. So, I've always been a proponent of that however I know since being with the band, we've had two vocal auditions. I know with both auditions they had a tape round and they invited a handful of people to come and audition in person. On the other hand, we had two of our trumpet players retire this past year and we had a trumpet audition for those two spots. It was a "cattle call". I think because of that and because it was for two positions, we had something like 80 trumpet players. That's fantastic for us because we get to choose from great players.

PR: So, it sounds like, and correct me if I'm wrong, that even though the specifics of the audition may vary from audition to audition and instrument to instrument, that a prospective musician can expect to play some kind of solo even if it's an etude plus excerpts and sight-reading?

CGT: Yeah, Our auditions will always have some sort of solo, some excerpts from standard band literature, and there is definitely some sight-reading.

PR: Is the sight-reading heavily weighted? I know some bands weight this more than others.

CGT: It's hard to say yes or no to that. I'll tell you a story. There was a trumpet audition and this one guy just sounded fantastic. He was an amazing player but his sight-reading was not as solid and it was the one thing that they were really trying to hound him on. I said to them that this guy sounds amazing. I think we should take him based off of that. He wasn't horrible at the sight-reading but he wasn't the strongest sight-reader there. However the sound, the tone, everything he had in terms of prepared music was fantastic. And the way I describe the job is there is about a year and a half where you're doing a lot of sight-reading but after that it's pretty much playing everything out of the ceremonial book. So, you know what's going on. You know what's coming up. You have a good idea and you've played it before. Plus everything else we do is fairly prepared. But on the other hand, we had a bass trombone audition and sight-reading was on that. We were asking a guy to read a standard Sousa march, I can't remember which one but from a style stand point the guy never really got it. I mean, he made it to the finals but he never got the idea of how to play the march in the right style from a sight-reading perspective. I wouldn't have cared if he missed notes or anything like that but I want somebody that has a basic idea of what the style is going to be at least. So, it's hard to say whether we weigh a lot on the sight-reading or we don't. I would say it's a fair amount but there are other things as well. I mean, we expect people to come in for the job and be able to sit down and play with us as soon as possible. That's really what we want to have. So, if your first

gig with us is a ceremony, you need to be able to at least read the book somewhat proficiently. However, if in the audition, we gather that the person is not grasping the style then that is probably going to be a negative. I don't know if that was the answer that you were looking for.

PR: Yes, I think that is a very reasonable answer. In other words, sight-reading is important, but there are other factors that need to be considered too and they all contribute. Being great at sight-reading isn't good enough.

CGT: That's exactly right.

PR: Do you still end up playing with chamber groups like brass quintets or is that type of thing reserved for auditions that are specifically geared to fill positions in those groups?

CGT: Well, it's interesting. We have three tuba players in the band and the one with the most seniority is playing with the brass quintet. On occasion [a different tuba player] may fill in when he can't play a gig. I know one of the questions you want to know about is the structure of the band as it pertains to all the chamber ensembles. Well, the way our band is structured is that the concert band comes first and foremost. Everybody that is in our band is involved with the concert band. Then we also have a brass quintet, and Dixie band, a woodwind quintet, a saxophone quartet, a swing group that is kind of going by the waste side right now. In the past, there was a tuba quartet but right now, we are not doing one. I guess those are all the documented chamber ensembles.

PR: So, basically the concert band is the main band and everything breaks off from that.

GCT: That is correct.

PR: And currently other than the concert band, the only group that uses a tuba is the brass quintet?

CGT: That is also correct.

PR: Okay.

CGT: And the way we divide the work between the three of us is...the tuba player in the brass quintet...the brass quintet plays a lot of ceremonial work. So, if the brass quintet is doing a job, that's what he does in addition to all the concert band stuff. On occasion the band will also split off into what we call our ceremonial group. It's a 21 piece group. Twenty-one personnel go and perform and with that, we will use one tuba. All the sections rotate personnel in and out of that group. The way the tuba section works is that the guy playing in the brass quintet only plays with them and the concert band. Then the

other two tuba players also play in the concert band and then they also rotate into that 21 piece group.

PR: Is this group a marching group?

CGT: It can be.

PR: I just want to make sure because when most of the other groups say ceremonial group, they usually mean the marching band.

CGT: Yes, it can be but it's not just that. We'll take the 21 piece group down to Washington D.C. to do some of the lesser changes of command or we'll take them out to ship launchings. A big reason for that and also why we don't take the whole band is since we are the only Coast Guard Band, budget definitely comes into play. So, we can do essential the same amount of work on half the cost, we are going to utilize that.

PR: So, how many tubas normally perform with the concert band on a typical concert?

CGT: All three tuba players will play usually.

PR: So basically, if there is a concert band performance, everyone has to be on it.

CGT: Yes. Everybody is usually on it. Now, that doesn't mean that all of us are playing on every piece. A lot of times, especially if we have a soloist, we'll back off to one on a part depending on what's written. For example, recently we were doing the Gordon Jacob's euphonium concerto. It has a split tuba part so we used two tubas on it instead of one. There are occasions where we will do vocal pieces and they tend to work well with one on a part. But yeah, everyone does play on the concert band concerts.

PR: How does that work when you when someone's sick, in a military class, or something else that makes them unable to play the concert?

CGT: It means we have to make due with two tuba players covering it. It's actually a benefit to us. While it's great to have all three tubas on stage, we are still able to cover it. I'll give you a great example. We were recently on tour and a tuba player's wife was 29 weeks pregnant. So, the band thought everything was going to be just fine. Then after a concert, he got a call that his wife had been admitted to the hospital. After talking to the chain of command and the section leader, they all told him to just go home. He was still on the flight when his child was born. Now we still had two weeks of the tour but everyone just told him to stay home. Take care of the family. The tour was finished with just two tubas. It worked great. Now had we only had two tubas I suspect they would have said the same thing but it would have been a more difficult situation.

PR: All I meant is there is less room for error when everyone has to be on every job.



CGT: Right.

PR: Let me get back to a few more of the audition related questions. So, you have the audition and it takes a couple of days. You get accepted. What happens then?

CGT: Next they check your references. And that is something they take very seriously. So for example, once I was deemed the winner of my audition, I then went into an interview session with our commanding officer, our executive officer, the section, and a couple of other senior enlisted members of the band. So, they wanted to get a feel for who I am. Basically, they wanted to make sure I was the right fit for the Coast Guard Band. This is because just being a good musician isn't enough. Not everyone is cut out to be in the military. There is a structure to military life that not everyone is prepared for. So, if the interview goes well then the next thing that happens is they check your references. They take this seriously. I know they called [my well known applied teacher] within a day of my interview. Once they heard back from him and everything checked out, then they called me up and said that they were officially offering me the position. At that point, if you accept the position then you have to wait for the paperwork to go through. Then we have a recruiter...well, he's not an actual recruiter but we have a person who helps recruit for the band specifically. So, he gets a hold of all the paperwork and sets up a trip to your local Military Entrance Processing Station.<sup>419</sup>

PR: So, the whole entrance processing is the same as any other branch? Do you have to go through a basic training correct?

CGT: We do not. We are similar to the "President's Own" Marine Band. So, our band members do not go through basic training.

PR: So, how do you learn the basic military things that you need to learn in order to survive in the military?

CGT: You want to know the short answer, trial and error. I mean, they handed me a packet and honestly there was some problems with it. Somebody showed me how to salute. But nobody ever mentioned the importance of all of this. That being said, I don't know if you've kept up with what is going on in congress but the bands are under scrutiny right now. So anyways, one of the things that has changed is that we are sending our members to a specific program at the Coast Guard basic training for two weeks. It is specifically designed for musicians coming into the band and it is taught by another musician who is...let me get back on track a little bit. In terms of our billet structure, the way we are set up, we have fifty-five musicians stationed in New London, CT and there

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<sup>419</sup> See Appendix A for definition of Military Processing Station, otherwise known as MEPS.

is one musician that is stationed at Cape May.<sup>420</sup> He is in charge of running the basic training band which is a ceremonial group of all the new recruits that come through. Now he also trains new musicians for our band. He teaches them grooming, how to salute, and anything that you need to know in order to be in the military. So, you get the basic knowledge but it doesn't have the same atmosphere that you get at basic training. I mean, they don't have to go through boat qualifications or anything like that like the Coast Guard recruits will have to go through.

PR: What about the musical training, whether it's marching or something else, is there any special training for that? Like for example, when you get to the band, do you go through a two week indoctrination for how the Coast Guard Band does things musically?

CGT: No. Well, we do have a check list that they have a month to go through. It has a listing of everyone in the band who has a department that they may have to go through. For example, they have to go to the supply department and our drum major. So, they sit down and learn who everybody is and just find information out. I will say this as for the marching aspect thing, we do not march all that often. In fact, it's gotten less and less since I entered the band. We marched maybe ten times a year when I first enlisted. Now it's maybe five times a year. So, it's really not all that much time that we are marching.

PR: I asked about marching because from my experience, I remember the marching being different in the military from what I did in high school and college marching bands. For example, the turns were done a little differently. So, I would guess your marching is a little simplified from that to make it more manageable.

CGT: Yes, it is simplified and we do have a couple of rehearsals on it with the whole band. These are purely refresher rehearsals. So, if we are marching in a parade, we never do any complex turns. We always do gate turns.<sup>421</sup> So, it is mainly just to focus on keeping the right feet on the right beats. So yeah, we just try to keep it as simple as possible. On occasion when we do things like reviews at the academy, we will have to do some more complex turns. So, we'll have to go out and rehearse those and make sure that everyone gets a refresher course on those things.

PR: So, there is no where that a person learns that when they first show up to the band?

CGT: No, it's on the job training. That is the best way to describe it.

PR: When should a potential new band member see a recruiter?

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<sup>420</sup> Cape May is described in more detail later in the interview.

<sup>421</sup> A gate turn is a marching maneuver that allows a band to march around a corner. The maneuver involves marching in a semi-circular or oval pattern around a corner while maintaining straight lines and columns. There are other maneuvers that military bands use but this is the simplest.

CGT: Really they don't see a recruiter until after the audition. Now we do open up the audition. So, say there is an active duty coast guard that wants to come into the band and there is an opening then they have to apply for the audition. If they win the audition, they then do a lateral transfer of rating.

PR: Okay, I only asked because I know that not every branch does it this way. For example, the Air Force usually asked the interested musicians to see a recruiter before auditioning because they want to see if you are prepared physically and that you are going to pass all the standards that the Air Force has. That way you don't waste both your time and the Air Force's time.

CGT: Right. We don't do any screening process before the audition. That is the true meaning of the word cattle-call. I think the "President's Own" Marine Band even takes your height and weight if you make it past the first round. I'm not positive of that but I know we do not do that. So yeah, I don't think anyone in the band talked to a recruiter prior to joining the band.

PR: Are you called Sailors?

CGT: The catch phrase that we are called is Coasties. But the rank and rating structure parallels the Navy. I know the Army has MOS<sup>422</sup> but the Navy and Coast Guard has a rating system and that's our job specialty. And as for the rankings, we don't have any sergeants. It's all petty officers, chief petty officers, and such. And the officer side, it parallels the Navy.

PR: You said the new school that the Coasties go to...

CGT: It's in Cape May, New Jersey.

PR: I am kind of curious about the one musician that goes to that basic training. What does he do?

CGT: He's in charge of training and rehearsing the ceremonial band that is put together from every recruit class that shows up. His position is kind of interesting. There was a guy who was there for almost thirty years as a company commander or drill sergeant. That was his job and that is what we have down there now.

PR: So, does a person come into the band for that specific position or do they come in to the band and rotate down there for something like a two year position?

CGT: Well, because we're a small service, it's kind of interesting. When the former chief that was there retired, they opened it up to any of us if we wanted to apply for it. It's an

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<sup>422</sup> See Appendix A for definition of MOS.

automatic billet to E-7 no matter what rank you are. So, they opened it up to anyone in our band if we wanted to go for it and no one went for it. So, what ended up happening was that there was a food service specialist or cook down there and he did a lateral transfer upgrading over to musician. He has some musical background and he is now in charge of the band down there at Cape May.

PR: But that is his job correct? He won't get transferred to somewhere else or anything will he? In other words, it's not a temporary position is it?

CGT: That is correct. I would say that all of our positions are permanent position billets. So, we're here. We're not rotated around or anything.

PR: Okay, that one position seemed so unusual that I was curious about it. So, now that a person is in the band, is the concert band the primary performance ensemble in the band for a tuba player?

CGT: Yes. Definitely. Especially right now.

PR: Are the performances that the band does primarily ceremonial or public relations oriented?

CGT: I would say it is about 50/50 for us.

PR: That seems like a good ratio.

CGT: I know. It's a great ratio. I mean, it's different from one part of the year to another. I mean for example, if we're on tour obviously most of our performances are public relations events. But I mean, the month of May is graduation time here at the academy. And it's also Change of Command season so every other day we're driving up and down the east coast to play Changes of Commands or Coast Guard Academy Graduations. So then, we're doing tons of ceremonial stuff. So, when you look at the entire year, the ratio is probably 50/50.

PR: Do you end up doing a lot of touring. I mean, it sounds like certain times of the year, you are on the road a lot.

CGT: Well, really we travel quite a bit. That being said and this is going to sound like the reserves,<sup>423</sup> most members are gone about one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Our tours are budgeted around a two week travel period every year. I can say this because I know you mentioned talking about collateral duties, and one of my collateral duties is travel marketing for the band. So, I can talk pretty extensively about tours. Our tour

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<sup>423</sup> This is a reference to a previous slogan for the Army National Guard that describes itself as something that requires "one weekend a month, two weeks a year."

budget is around one, two week time a year. We'd like to tour more. We'd like to have more money to do it but that being said based off of current economic times, I don't think we're going to get it. So, we are going to stick with what we have.

PR: Those tours are in conjunction with the other premier bands too so that you all don't go to the same quadrant of the country.

CGT: We try to do that but we don't guarantee it. The difference is that all the other military bands are a part of the military District of Washington and we are not. So, they have better communication about a lot of those regions. We do have a list of where we're supposed to travel throughout the year. Although, we had to change our plans last year and ended up going through the same area of the country as the Army Field Band went just a few months after them. That was because of our requirements though. Part of it was because we got invited to the WASBE<sup>424</sup> Conference in Taiwan and the WASBE Conference paid for everything for the entire trip to Taiwan but we had to make our way to California. So, to balance it out, we did an entire tour in California and the surrounding area out of order. But we are going back to that touring matrix that we usually go by with the other premier bands next year. So, we'll be in, I think, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri next year.

PR: So, it was the conditions that determined why you couldn't stick to the matrix last year.

CGT: Correct.

PR: You were mentioning collateral duties earlier. Does everyone have collateral duties in the band?

CGT: Yes. We do not have a staff at all. So, everyone is required to do some sort of collateral duty in order to make sure that the band keeps running. Obviously as you get higher up in rank, you get more responsibility.

PR: I know in the active duty military as you get higher up, you have less and less time to spend on your horn. Would you say that is also true with the Coast Guard Band?

CGT: Yes, I would say that happens in the Coast Guard as well. It's unfortunate and I don't think we would like it to be that way, but it's just kind of the nature of the business. But it's hard to say. I mean, we still have some senior enlisted that sound fantastic on what they're doing and they're still working hard on their instrument. So, it just depends.

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<sup>424</sup> World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles.

PR: I would imagine that the musicians that you get are highly self-motivating, professional quality, musicians that understand that they need to stay proficient on their horns. That's their livelihood. So, even though they have more responsibility and less time to play, they also can be smart about how they divide up their time.

CGT: That's probably the best way to put it. They need to be more conscious of time management.

PR: Since you don't have to do basic training, what happens physical fitness-wise and body image-wise? I know you mentioned that sometimes people get weighed but when you're in the band does that happen on a regular basis?

CGT: We have semi-annual weigh-ins with the Coast Guard. That's just part of the job. If you pass that weigh-in, then you're fine. Nobody cares. They don't require folks to work out, say in mandatory PT. Every new member is required to fill out a physical fitness plan. However, that person monitoring and checking in that you are maintaining that physical fitness plan is very lacking. So, you put the plan together but there is no accountability for it.

PR: Do you have a physical fitness test then?

CGT: No, the Coast Guard does not have a physical fitness test. In the Coast Guard, certain jobs have a physical fitness test but it has nothing to do with musicians.

PR: So, as long as you are able to maintain a body image that is consistent with somebody who should be in the Coast Guard, that is more important than anything else.

CGT: Correct. I was studying to be a personal trainer for awhile and I tried to increase the physical fitness program. I mean, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink. So, unless it's required no one is going to do it. That being said, making it required does nothing to improve moral. I mean, I've looked at the studies and mandatory PT does nothing to aid the long term health benefits.

PR: I can understand that. I enjoy exercise but when I was in the military and was forced to exercise, I didn't enjoy it.

CGT: Well that's the thing; people have to come to it on their own terms. So anyways, it's just nice not having to deal with that.

PR: I have just a couple more questions. Beside the Coast Guard song, do you have any other music that you play on a regular basis? Anything that might be useful to know before a person joins the Coast Guard Band?

CGT: We sort of work off of the Navy's list. I mean, we call it the Coast Guard Hymn but it's really *Eternal Father*. We use the Navy Hymn because it does talk about the seas and sailors and such. You also have *Semper Paratus*, the Coast Guard March. But really that's about it. There's not a lot of other Coast Guard specific music out there.

PR: None of that would come up on an audition would it? That is something that they won't need until they actually arrive at the band.

CGT: That is correct. I've never heard of it being put on an audition.

PR: Is there anything that you do in that Coast Guard that you might not do if you were in a different branch?

CGT: The only thing I can think of is that, I remember before I won this job, I took an Air Force Band audition and they asked [for] scales.

PR: In my interview with an Air Force tuba player, I found out that they don't do that anymore.

CGT: Other than that, I can't think of anything.

PR: Do you incorporate any non-traditional tuba playing, whether it's jazz and lead sheet playing or anything else like that into your audition? For that matter, now that you're in, do you do anything like that now? In other words, is there a need to know anything like that?

CGT: You know what, I have done a little of it but it has not been a requirement. When the Dixieland band was formed they used tuba on it. And I do know that one of the guys in the section, when he did his audition, was required to play some Dixieland tuba. It was not asked for the rest of the tuba players in the section. Right now, our bass player really enjoys playing in the Dixieland band so everybody is willing to have him play upright bass. I think if he really didn't want to do it anymore one of the tuba players might jump in and do it. So if that happened, maybe the next opening might have some of that on it in the tuba audition. But I think it's need based. What are we looking for? Let me go back to the trumpet audition. One of the positions for trumpet that we just held, we knew it was going to involve playing in the brass quintet and the brass quintet does a fair amount of work. So, the finals had brass quintet playing with the Coast Guard Band Brass Quintet. And they had a say in which player they wanted to play with the brass quintet. So, I think if we need a tuba player that plays Dixieland, then we're going to include that into part of the audition. We haven't needed it for a while so it would be hard to say.

PR: Along those lines, are there any trends going on? I know financially, just as we were talking earlier, there have been a couple articles that suggest that the military should

dramatically cut back in its military bands. Are there any rumors like that? In other words, are there any rumors about perhaps losing or gaining a tuba?

CGT: Nothing that has come that far with it. I mean, there is a rumor that a Representative McCollum from Minnesota got the House to pass almost a 30% cut of D.O.D.<sup>425</sup> military music. The problem we have is figuring out how this affects us because we're not D.O.D. We're D.H.S.<sup>426</sup> and that makes a difference. I don't know if D.H.S. is going to try and parallel that or not. That being said, I've also heard rumors that the budget cut is not really going to happen or maybe it will but it will be hidden somehow. Again, all these are rumors.

PR: Well, this question is meant for the person that might read this five years from now and wonder what they may have to deal with.

CGT: The way I look at it right now is...if they decide to cut a tuba billet, then it's probably going to be [the person with the least seniority and lowest rating] but the best way to handle it is to keep your nose clean and stay out of trouble. I mean, it's the typical military thing. Make sure you dot all your "i's" and cross all of your "t's," make sure everything is set up and just be involved. Being a good citizen, I think, is just good advice anytime with anything in the military. I mean, I've been hearing rumors for six years about different things with the Coast Guard Band and what they are going to do and nothing's happened. For example, there [are] rumors about moving us to D.C. Some people say, "Does Washington really need another military band?" There are also rumors about moving a detachment to Washington to get involved with the Coast Guard Headquarters down there. The detachment would be a brass quintet and a rhythm section in order to be as versatile an ensemble as possible. I don't know if that would be in addition to our current billets. I think that's the stipulation of what we're trying to do. That being said, in our current budgetary environment, I don't foresee any of this happening, because it costs money to move anybody or add the billets. I would say the Coast Guard is more worried about its infrastructure and how much it has to do as far as responsibilities than it is about where it's going to house its band. Is that what you meant?

PR: Yes. The question was meant to be very open. I mean, no one is able to tell what will happen five years from now. This question is just meant to give an idea of perhaps where the band is headed based off of rumors and where it's coming from for potential future band members.

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<sup>425</sup> Department of Defense

<sup>426</sup> Department of Homeland Security



CGT: In general, the Coast Guard is traditionally known for doing more with less. So, the idea of doing a small ensemble in Washington kind of makes sense under those premises. I don't necessarily see it happening because of the current budgetary constraints that everybody is under across the board. I think they are saying that in five years, the D.O.D has to cut 70 million dollars from their budget or something like that. So, I can't really speculate on what is going to happen in the next five years.

PR: Oh I understand. That is an honest answer. What have you appreciated most about being in the Coast Guard as compared to both civilian life and as it might relate to being in a different band?

CGT: Do you mean specific to the Coast Guard Band as it relates to other military bands?

PR: Actually both. I mean if there are advantages specific to the Coast Guard, I definitely would like to know those but if there are also advantages that all military bandsmen get; I'll like to hear those as well. Most people I've talked to tend to emphasize the benefits and the job security that comes along with anyone being in the military.

CGT: The first thing that comes to my mind with my child in the hospital is the benefits. I think the average hospital cost is about \$7,000 a day and they have been there [for a while]. So, we're counting our blessings for that. As far as Coast Guard specific related, I love the fact that it's a small service and you can actually get to know people in other areas very easily and keep track of them throughout their career. I know that once you reach the rank of E-7, they send you off to senior enlisted school and everyone has to go to this throughout the Coast Guard, musicians included. While there you get to know people pretty well and it's a small enough service that you can travel to a town and the Coast Guard shows up and you probably know somebody there. Or you go down to a ceremony at the headquarters and there's a good chance that you're going to get to know somebody very quickly. It's a pretty amazing network just because it's a small service in that respect.

PR: I had never thought of that. That does seem like a great advantage.

CGT: It's like, for example, I know a couple of the Chiefs down at headquarters and I need to say, "Hey, what's going on with this for real?" I can call them up and say, "Hey, give me the details on this." So, you can find things out very quickly. There are simply less hoops that we have to jump through to figure things out.

PR: I have one last question. Since the Coast Guard Band is the only band in the Coast Guard and you're short personnel for a gig, what do you do? So, let's say you need a harp player or a fourth tuba player because the first three all have broken legs or something, what do you have to do to fill those holes?

CGT: We actually have a budget and much like a symphony orchestra, we can hire extras or hire substitutes based on repertoire or based on our needs. A good example of that is that we have a bassoon player that is leaving to go back to school...but we're not going to have our new bassoon player yet because she has actually already been hired after she gets out of the Coast Guard to play as a civilian for a September concert.

PR: I think that covers all of my questions. If there is anything that I've missed, because I want to represent the Coast Guard as best as possible, feel free to add it but I think we covered everything.

CGT: I think we covered it all. I've found that a lot of the premier bands are pretty similar. I mean, they all have their quirks but they aren't all that different. I know you had talked about whether we had regularly collaborated with other bands. And actually yes we do. It's interesting. Being the only Coast Guard band, if they do any joint service ceremonies then they call us up. And this is at all levels. I specifically remember playing on the Sunday before President Obama's inauguration. There was a big concert that had U2, Tom Hanks narrating *A Lincoln Portrait*, and Beyonce was singing there. At the concert they had a joint services orchestra, so they have about three or four of us from the Coast Guard playing as part of that. I mean there was Marines, Army, Navy. All the services were represented with premier band personnel. But we'll also do things like down at Norfolk, Virginia, they will do a joint forces celebration and I know they do one out in Hawaii also and we'll also take part in those too since we're the only Coast Guard band.

PR: So, you become the Coast Guard's representative whenever they need something musical.

CGT: Oh yeah, definitely.

PR: Well, I appreciate your time and energy and I thank you for indulging me.

CGT: Sure.

*The U.S. Military Academy Band Phone Interview, 24 August 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): The first half of this interview is all about the audition processes. So, my first question is what was your first experience like with the band? And more importantly, what is the experience like for someone who is might be joining now?

U.S. Military Academy Band Tuba Player (WPT): First, there was a CD round. I think you had to put the Hindemith<sup>427</sup> on it and then it was basically anything else that you wanted to put on it. So, they didn't specify excerpts, band or orchestra, or etudes or anything like that. The only mandatory thing on the audition was the Hindemith. So, that was the first round. After that was the in person round.

PR: Then they called you or sent you a letter?

WPT: I believe they sent a letter. And they also called. I mean, I don't remember if there was a call first or I got something in the mail first, but there was some correspondence with the principle tuba in the section. They had a date set up for the audition and I think they invited three people for this round. Plus they invited two others from a previous audition that they had but didn't choose anyone. So, there were five people invited to the live audition. Then there were two rounds that day.

PR: What did you have to play in those rounds?

WPT: We had to be able to play the Hindemith again but I don't remember if we actually had to play it. Other than that it was all band excerpts and some sight-reading. I can't quite remember what specific pieces they wanted though...

PR: That's alright. I'm not really concerned with the specifics. I'm more concerned with the fact that you had to play a solo. Did you play a solo that they picked for you? Did you play a lot of excerpts? Was there a lot of sight-reading? Was there scales?

WPT: I don't think we even got to the Hindemith. For the first round, it was all excerpts from a packet that they had sent us to prepare. So, once they had contacted us and said, "Would you like to come for the in-person audition?" Then they sent us a packet to prepare of music several weeks later and you had around a month to a month and a half to prepare it. The packet was all band excerpts and it said play the lower octave wherever there is a choice. So, for the first round they said, "Play this, this, and this." Then in the second round they had us play with the rest of the section.

PR: It sounds like there must have been a significant amount of ensemble playing for your audition.

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<sup>427</sup> *Sonata for Tuba and Piano* by Paul Hindemith.

WPT: Yes. It was probably one of the deciding facts for them because you're not auditioning for them as a soloist. So, it definitely matters how you play in a section. The first round was blind then we broke for lunch... After we came back, we met with a couple of people in the Chain of Command, the people that were higher up like the Sergeant Major for the band and the Sergeant Major of the Hell Cats<sup>428</sup> and they interviewed you face to face to see if you were a good candidate.

PR: To review then, you had a solo but you didn't really play it. You had a bunch of excerpts. And then you had ensemble playing.

WPT: Yes. Basically.

PR: Was there sight-reading at all?

WPT: Yes, it happened in the later rounds. They pulled marches from our marching pouch that we have.

PR: Okay, That is something that I've noticed is a lot different between all the bands. Some bands are really emphasizing sight-reading and some consider it an important part of the audition but it's not the dominant part.

WPT: Yeah, It definitely wasn't a dominant part because I would probably remember it more. And there were no scales. I think that was in your question also.

PR: The premier bands seem to be getting away from that. The active duty bands are also but I think the premier bands are quicker.

WPT: Yeah well if you don't know your scales they can tell because you won't have good technique on other things.

PR: So, it sounds as if you did not have much say in what you played in the audition. Everything that you played was something that they put in front of you. The only thing you had in your control was how prepared you were from the packet that they sent you.

WPT: Exactly, The in-person audition was 100%.

PR: Was there anything in the audition that involved marching?

WPT: No.

PR: How about body image things, was there anything like a physical or checking your weight or body fat?

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<sup>428</sup> The drum and bugle part of the Military Academy Band.

WPT: Before the audition, no. Part of the audition packet, when you send in the CD, you send in a resume and a full length photo. So, I think they are able to eliminate people who are completely out of the realm of possibility. We were talking about that in the band just the other day actually. We don't really know why they do that.

PR: Do you mean why they require a full length photo?

WPT: Right.

PR: Did they send you to MEPS<sup>429</sup> before or after your in-person audition?

WPT: There is a MEPS pre-qualification but there is also a MEPS visit that is more thorough after you win the audition.

PR: The process that most of the bands tell me is that you win the audition, [and] then they send to you or a local recruiter with a form that says you have a spot reserved for you in the band. Then you go to the MEPS station and get your physical and stuff like that.

WPT: Yeah, that's what I think it was. They have a list of dates that says you have to have this done by this date and this done by that date. That was because they wanted to make sure that if I was ruled out by MEPS then they would time to go with something different. So, I guess after the in person audition I must have received a letter that stated that I had something like a week or two to go to MEPS and take the ASVB<sup>430</sup> and get a physical. It was like a pre-screening type of thing.

PR: That seems to be a difference between some of the bands. I know there is at least one band that requires you to get a preliminary screening prior to arriving for the in-person audition just in case. You don't have to sign anything but they want to make sure you're physically qualified.

WPT: Yeah. I'm going to double check on that because that seems important. I do remember that there were a couple trips to MEPS and it was not the most fun experience. I think there was a pre-screening in between the recording and the in-person audition. The pre-screening didn't do everything that we had to do when we went off to basic<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> See Appendix A for information on MEPS.

<sup>430</sup> See Appendix A for information on ASVAB.

<sup>431</sup> Basic Combat Training is the first part of the Army's Initial Entry Training program but is often called other names including boot camp and for the Army is approximately 8-9 weeks in length. This training occurs in five different locations, Fort Benning, GA, Fort Jackson, SC, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, Fort Sill OKAY, or Fort Knox, KY. A major exception to this is for women, who can only go to Fort Leonard Wood, Fort, Sill, or Fort Jackson. "Army Careers: Ways to Serve the Army," U.S. Army, August 30, 2011, [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com).

but I think there might have been a preliminary “are you even somewhat qualified” type of screening.

PR: So, is it like sitting down with a doctor and he just says, “Okay, you’re good,” type of situation?

WPT: Correct...

PR: Now after you went through MEPS, you went to basic training and after the graduation, since you didn’t have to go to the Army’s School of Music<sup>432</sup> to get you advance musical training, how did you get that training on how to march and things like that?

WPT: You’re right. After basic, we were sent right to the band. I was kind of thrown right into the mix. We were going on a trip within the first week or so of my arrival. Basically, they pulled me aside beforehand because we had some marching things coming up and I had a meeting with the drum major. They showed me all the mace movements and a couple of people, when we did the drill would tell me, “this is a left turn,” or “this is a right turn,” because I had done marching band in high school but nothing like this. Military bands aren’t usually making shapes. And the marching had to be perfect because, for example, for the reviews with the cadets when all the parents are there and the command is there and the superintendent is there. So, that was a little nerve-racking and new. But there was nothing geared directly for me. I just marched next to somebody and they knew I was new so they just gave me pointers and tips to make sure I was grasping everything along the way.

PR: So, in other words, there really is no transition. You just kind of learn as you go.

WPT: Exactly. Because once you get out of basic training, you have like ten days to get your stuff together and then you show up and you start.

PR: I remember those ten days. I wasn’t supposed to get those ten days, but they screwed up my paperwork and marked me as being married. It wasn’t the last time my paperwork was messed up either.

WPT: I was glad for the ten days just to get my chops back. To not play in basic for so long, you can’t just show up and play<sup>433</sup>.

PR: Think about this, the active duty people have to take an audition as soon as they get to the school of music. Could you imagine having to do that?

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<sup>432</sup> See Appendix A for a definition.

<sup>433</sup> According to recent correspondence, this process has changed. Current musicians arrive and attend a number of online training courses before they can even start playing with the band.

WPT: That would be horrible. I was so nervous just playing around people. I think I literally left out half of the notes during concerts and rehearsals for a while. And they were fine with that. I mean, I said to them, “Look, I’m new. Everybody is looking at me and staring at me and this tuba feels really weird to me. I’m not going to play.” And they were glad. There said, “Listen. We’d rather have you not play than to jump in and mess everything up.” It was mostly nerves. Supposedly the rule of thumb is that after three days, your chops are back to normal but that is so that you can play sort of decently. But the ease and natural ability and the automatic movements of the small muscles are totally gone. You have to think about everything it’s very weird.<sup>434</sup>

PR: So, what is the make-up of the band? Does everyone kind of fall under one large ensemble like the concert band and everything breaks off from there or are there multiple different ensembles...?

WPT: Technically the USMAB or the United State Military Academy Band, that’s what it’s called, is comprised of all three ensembles. There is the Concert Band which has about 50 to 60 people in it. Then there is the Hell Cats and that’s the drum and bugle corps which has maybe 10 people in it. And then there is the Jazz Knights and that’s the jazz band/ big band. All of us together minus the Hell Cats do anything that is marching band.<sup>435</sup> So, then within all of those ensembles there are other ensembles. For instance, the Jazz Knights have another band called the Benny Havens Band.<sup>436</sup> They do, for example the hops for the cadets. Then the Hell Cats are the Hell Cats. Now within the concert band, there are multiple brass quintets. There are three of them.<sup>437</sup> Then there are various woodwind quintets. There’s a group called Quintette 7 which plays a lot of, for example, Raymond Scott music as well as a lot of original pieces and has a tuba, piano, saxophone, and clarinet.<sup>438</sup> It’s a really eclectic group of people.

PR: What is the Hell Cats? Is there a tuba in that?

WPT: No. That’s specifically drums and bugles. They don’t even play trumpets. Their main mission is to play Reveille, meal formation, retreat, and funerals. They play at the meals in the dining halls. At the end of the day, they play for the flag to come down. So, that’s their main mission. Then they will do marching band with us. In addition when

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<sup>434</sup> This is a personal opinion and might not be everyone’s experience.

<sup>435</sup> The Hell Cats are unique. They sometimes perform with the marching band; however, they are unique and not always able to perform all marching performances.

<sup>436</sup> The Benny Havens Band is the official United States Military Academy Band’s party band. It consists of approximately two singers, six horns, and a rhythm section.

<sup>437</sup> This has recently been reduced two.

<sup>438</sup> The full ensemble used to have a saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, tuba, piano, and two percussionists. The tuba has since been exchanged for a bass. “West Point Band Home,” 30 August 2011, accessed 30 August 2011, <http://www.westpoint.edu/band/>.

they are out on the field, they sound the commands. They call us to attention and stuff like that.<sup>439</sup>

PR: They are probably pretty busy. I couldn't imagine getting up at six in the morning just to play Reveille. So, the concert band has three tuba players. Is that all of the tuba players in the entire band?

WPT: Right.<sup>440</sup>

PR: So, if there are three brass quintets are you in just that one brass quintet or do you swap around to fill whatever gig comes around?<sup>441</sup>

WPT: Yes, I'm just in the one. There is the West Point Brass Quintet, the Regimental Brass Quintet, and the Highlands Brass Quintet. Basically it's not like you audition for that. I came in there and they said, "Okay. You're in this brass quintet." I said, "Okay." They kind of just do what to do and you listen.<sup>442</sup>

PR: Yeah, but it's kind of hard to leave out notes in a brass quintet.

WPT: Yeah.

PR: So, besides the brass quintet, the concert band, and the marching band, are there any other ensembles that have tubas in them? Is there a tuba quartet or anything?

WPT: There is also a tuba quartet.

PR: So, there is a lot of playing opportunities for tuba players?

WPT: Yes. For example, brass quintets are often getting tasked to play retirement ceremonies, changes of command, promotion ceremonies, and various other ceremonies

<sup>439</sup> Military ceremonies involve a lot of pageantry. The participants therefore often need to be able to move in sync with each other. The traditional way to do this is through bugle calls. So for example, a call to attention has a specific melody and a call to parade rest is approximately an inversion of that melody. Modern ceremonies can sometimes forego this by having the master of ceremonies yell the commands to the participants.

<sup>440</sup> As of the Fall 2012, the number of tubas will be reduced to two. Furthermore, because the band has been reduced to two tuba players, the most recent Euphonium audition asked for an individual that could perform euphonium as well as sousaphone and the audition involved playing sousaphone. This was done in case the band occasionally might need a third person in the band capable of filling in on sousaphone based on illness or other emergencies.

<sup>441</sup> Again, the number of brass quintets has since been reduced to two.

<sup>442</sup> The Regimental Brass Quintet no longer exists. It was cut because there were no longer enough personnel to continue the ensemble. Furthermore, because the band has been reduced to two tuba players, the most recent Euphonium audition asked for an individual that could perform euphonium as well as sousaphone and the audition involved playing sousaphone. This was done in case the band occasionally might need a third person in the band capable of filling in on sousaphone based on illness or other emergencies.



that come up throughout the year. Plus there are things that are not even on post. For example, there was a fleet week at the Intrepid and a quintet went and played on the Intrepid for that. So, the band's operations staff gets calls for things like that and all the chamber groups take turns going to these things. So yeah, it can be a lot of playing.

PR: Do you have any collateral duties?

WPT: Everyone in the band has collateral duties. I have two right now and that probably won't stay the same throughout my career.

PR: Is it something you're required to do or is it something that is attached to promotion so everyone just does it because they want to get promoted?

WPT: It is attached to promotion and if you don't volunteer, you will be *volun-told*... And you will not get promoted unless you have a second duty. Though having a second duty does not mean you will get promoted. It is just a necessity for us to have people doing a second duty.

PR: Does the band have any support staff at all?

WPT: Yeah, we actually just got a photographer/publicity person. She's been here maybe six or eight months. That's our first person dedicated to that. We have several people in the band taking pictures and we have a lot of people working in publicity but that is her duty. We have two sound people who do recordings and engineer sound when we're playing indoors and out at the Trophy Point concerts, the outside summer series concerts and any other recordings that we may have. We have somebody that is in administration or operations. She used to be in the band and now that is her sole duty.

PR: Is it common to switch over to more of the administrative side like that?

WPT: I don't know how often that happens. She had been in the band before I arrived and was working in operations also. But I think there are four people. The two sound people are technically part of the band. They are not really considered support staff. The publicity person is support staff. The operations person is also. Plus we have a supply person dedicated specifically to do that. Then we have an administration guy.

PR: It seems like, because of how often you are playing, that can really make you busy.

WPT: Yeah, which is kind of why...I don't know how people in the band do it. Because even though those four people are here and that's their job, they basically tell the other people helping them out what to do and delegate out a lot. Don't get me wrong they are there all day but there is so much work to go around that there are many people in the band that are so busy doing stuff that they are there all day every day. Because the band

wouldn't function without the people within band having the computer skills and stuff like that and it's not in the budget to have enough support staff to operate without people in the band being able to do it. So, I think it's out of necessity that people in the band do that stuff.

PR: So getting back to the performing side, out of all the groups that you have, which ones tend to play the most? In other words, do you play more in chamber settings than you do in marching band and concert band?

WPT: To be honest, it kind of depends on the season. Concert Band does concerts pretty much throughout the year. Sometimes it plays every couple of weeks and plays all over the place. Last week we had three concerts in one week. During the summer we have Trophy Point<sup>443</sup> concerts, which is basically every other Sunday the concert band does it and every other alternating Sunday, the Jazz Knights has a concert. So, every Sunday night during the summer there's a concert outside that is free and open to the public. In addition, we play funerals. Plus this is review season. During the summer and fall we have a lot of reviews. During the fall it gets busy because we play at all the home football games.

PR: Probably the best university marching band in the country.

WPT: Yeah. There is also a band made up of Cadets called the Cadet Band that also plays in the stands. We play a couple of things but we mainly do the half time and pre-game shows for all the home football games and then we also do the Army-Navy game in Philadelphia. So, it just depends on the season.

PR: On a related note and I don't know if you can answer it, how does being in an academy band affect you schedule as it relates to the other premier bands and their schedules?

WPT: Generally speaking, I don't know enough about what they do. All I can do is speculate. Our mission as the Military Academy Band is to support the cadets. So, I don't know. They may do a lot of concerts, parades, and ceremonies but so much of what we do is...all the reviews, ceremonies, parades...so much is attached to the academy and the cadets that I don't think any of the other bands have that as part of their mission.

PR: The Academy Band is very much a....

WPT: Specialized.

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<sup>443</sup> Trophy Point is a scenic battlefield overlooking the Hudson River Valley in West Point, NY.

PR: Yeah. Even when I auditioned for the band a few years ago, I wondered what I would have been getting myself into, had I won the job. And that is ultimately what this paper is all about.

WPT: I think even the field bands...I mean for example, the football games are a major part of our responsibilities. It's kind of the university part of West Point. It's a college football game which can be kind of fun.

PR: Is that something that the band looks forward to doing?

WPT: I think it is an individual thing. It is a long day and many of people in the band have been in for a long time. They have children, families, and wear and tear and that complicates the situation for them but I cannot speak for them personally.

PR: Don't forget the cold once it gets to be November.

WPT: Yeah like the Army-Navy game...last year it was 55 degrees which was great but from what people say to me, that seems to be what people dread. In addition, most years we end up playing...or at least the past couple of years, we've been playing with the New York Phil around that time. So, we're in the city. We sleep overnight. Then we race down to Philadelphia, play the Army-Navy game and race back to New York to do the concert. So, it's kind of crazy. Some people dread that also. So yeah, football games get cold but you kind of sit around in the stands for a good portion of the time...but to get back to the original question, I can't say what they do. I think they probably do a lot of parades and Presidential support and stuff like that. Their mission is probably supporting the President and our mission is supporting the cadets.

PR: You mentioned your trip to Philadelphia; do you do a lot of traveling besides that?

WPT: We did a long trip to Dallas. I can't remember how long it was but it was several days. We did an overnight trip to Connecticut. Then, like I said before, the trip to the Army-Navy game and the trip to New York. But we do a lot of day outings. So, a large number of our trips are for concerts to outlying areas in New York, Connecticut, or Pennsylvania where it kind of makes for long days but we don't necessarily stay overnight that often. The larger trips, like the one to Dallas only happen once every few years.

PR: So, the extended trips are somewhat rare but the overnight trips sort of come with the territory of being a musician at West Point. The two week tours don't happen very often.

WPT: Exactly. But we do have what are called TDY's.<sup>444</sup> The individual chamber groups do travel a lot. There are a couple of weeks during the year, two weeks here and two weeks there, which is reserved for chamber group outings. So, a lot of the groups go to universities. A lot of it is used for recruiting and spreading the word and the chamber groups do a recital series at universities and master classes or go to the Midwest Horn Workshop or whatever tuba convention there is. I think a four week period out of the year is reserved for these chamber group outings. That's a lot of travel but it's not the whole band at once.

PR: Do you have specific regions that you want to cover each year or is it more about just going to whatever opportunity you have?

WPT: The trips are planned in advance but a woodwind quintet could be in the mid-west and a brass quintet could be in Georgia or Florida. So, it's all over the map.

PR: To get into some military logistics types of questions, do you have physical fitness and tests on a regular basis?

WPT: Yes. Every six months.

PR: Do you have organized exercise on a daily basis?

WPT: No. Thankfully I'm really glad they trust us to do that on our own. Then maybe a month and a half before what's called the APFT or Army Physical Fitness Test, which right now happens in November and April, your section leader might say, "Okay, let's do a diagnostic and make sure everyone can pass it." Because if you don't pass it, you look bad, they look bad, and everyone looks bad. It's a big deal. You can fail it once and get a re-test. If you fail it twice then you are not in good shape. The same thing with the weight. If you don't pass the weight, you can get taped.<sup>445</sup> If you don't pass the tape then they put you on a weight loss regiment. So basically, those two things you can get kicked out of the Army whether you are in the band or not...

PR: Do you do a lot of non-musical things like classes? I know some of the other bands talk about doing a lot of training and classes and stuff like that.

WPT: Yes. It's constant. A lot of it is done quarterly and a lot of it is online training. For example you have to do some to make sure you know about internet security or what to do in the case of a bomb scare. A lot of it, again, is online and then you take a test. Then

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<sup>444</sup> See Appendix A for definition.

<sup>445</sup> Being taped is a way to measure body fat. In the army, if you are a man, they measure the waist and neck and if you a woman then they measure the waist, neck and hips. The numbers are then run through a formula and the resulting number must not be more than whatever the standard is that individuals age and sex.

every three months we'll have classes like the one we did just a few days ago that was about not drinking and taking drugs. That was one part of it. Equal opportunity was another part. So to answer your question, yes we do have a lot of classes. Around every three months we go through pretty much the same classes. So, any class that is Army wide, we have to do as well.

PR: Obviously you don't carry a weapon around and do field training but you do have to do some training.

WPT: Right.

PR: Is there any music that would be useful to know when coming to do an audition for your band that they probably wouldn't need to know if they were auditioning somewhere else?

WPT: I don't know what the other bands play or don't play. I remember asking someone this because I wasn't really sure. Obviously anything with "Army" in the title like *Army Goes Rolling Along*, *On Brave Old Army Team*, or *Army Blue* are geared towards the Army. And there are many more but I don't know the differences between what we play and what other groups play. When I was auditioning...there is a lot of music that we play when we are doing reviews and stuff like that, we have a pouch that must have like 200 pieces of music in it. Some of it we pull out once in a while and some of it is specific for things like funerals or reviews that get cycled in constantly. Especially for somebody like a tuba player that is coming in and playing something on BB flat,<sup>446</sup> maybe it would be good to get them ahead of time but...knowing most tuba players, they probably wouldn't practice them anyways.

PR: A lot of those parts don't have very interesting tuba parts.

WPT: Actually a lot of them do. I mean, they often have those march parts to them but a lot of them also have a lot of notes and you're constantly playing, plus it can be especially challenging if you're not used to BB flat. So yeah, a lot of them have some

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<sup>446</sup> Potential premier band tuba players often have at least some college education, and during this education it is common for a tuba player to learn to play CC tuba as their primary instrument. From that point in their college career their only experience with BB flat instruments might be if they played sousaphone in the college marching band. On the other hand, if they don't play in marching band, then it is possible that they may go years without that experience. Because of this, the transition to a military band is sometimes more difficult for tuba players than other musicians in that they now have to learn music on both a BB flat sousaphone and a CC tuba. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that most auditions for the military do not include the sousaphone even though playing it is a major part of many military tuba players job description which means that it is possible for someone to win a premier band job without ever playing BB flat sousaphone and then getting to the band and having to learn it on the job. Although this is rare in the current day and age of competitive drum and bugle corps and high school marching bands, not to mention the emphasis most colleges put into their school's marching bands, it is still possible.

pretty cool low brass things going on, like a lot of Sousa. You'd stick out pretty badly if you messed up on them. So, there are better parts than you would think....

PR: A lot of these marches can be found in all the service bands but the reason I ask this question is because when I was in the Army I played a march called *American Soldier March*. I don't know if you play it at all but we played it all the time when I was in the Army. But I had never heard of it beforehand and I have never seen it since. So, it seemed like something that might have been really useful to know before I have joined the Army.

WPT: Yeah, there are some of those and it's especially hard playing them on another instrument. Plus some of them are tricky.

PR: So, it seems like perhaps a person coming to an audition maybe not master all these marches but at least play as many as they can beforehand and just get their feet wet with them all.

WPT: Maybe not before the audition but once you know you are going to be in the band it definitely wouldn't hurt to get a hold of some of those. I mean, because you are also coming right out of basic [combat training] so it definitely might be smart and it certainly wouldn't hurt to have some of them ahead of time. That way it is one less thing that you're not [having to learn on the job].

PR: I recently found out that the Air Force Academy Band is no longer considered a premier band and that the Naval Academy Band is also having troubles. Is the Military Academy band dealing with any threats of losing your premier band status?

WPT: It's not happening but because of all that stuff happening and because of...I don't know if you read a while back there was an article about how much of the defense budget is spent on the military bands because for us and all of the other military bands it's the defense budget...

PR: That article was in the Washington Post.<sup>447</sup>

WPT: Yeah, then you've seen that article. So, I would say in times like these with basically an economic crisis that can attract attention. Recently they passed a bill in Congress that lowered the budget for military bands specifically by 230 million. So, with all that stuff happening plus like you said all the stuff happening to the Air Force Band...we get literally thousands for the July 4<sup>th</sup> concerts and the 1812 concerts and luckily all the cadets we are playing for now, there are around four thousand cadets at any

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<sup>447</sup> Pincus, Walter. "Vast Number of Military Bands May Not be Music to Gate's Ears." *Washington Post*, August 24, 2010.

given time, are going to become officers. Plus, a lot of the people making decisions about the band now, at one point, were cadets here at West Point. So, that is also kind of a bonus. It's kind of hard to separate the band from everything that goes on at West Point. But yeah, that is a worry of everybody. Economic times are really rough right but cutting 230 million from our budget is ridiculous. I don't remember the percentage but it's like thirty percent or something. I forget what Senator said this but some lady...she didn't say "In a year we spend this much money on military bands." Instead she said, "In the next twenty years we are going to spend fifteen billion dollars on military bands." So, that causes this huge gasp but compared to everything else we are not even a drop in the bucket. We are nothing. We hardly have any budget but it's about cutting what's unnecessary and since we're not fighting the war... So, there is fear but there is no actual word.

PR: If it helps, this is on other band's minds as well. There are only a couple bands that feel they are safe with where they are at and doubt that the government would ever do anything to their band.

WPT: And they probably are a little more in the dark than they should be.

PR: Well, it's like, I talked to a musician in the Marine Band and got the impression that the Marine Band can't be demoted so as long as there is a country, there will be a Marine Band.

WPT: Yeah, probably if anybody is safe, it is the "Pershing's Own" [Army Band] and the "President's Own" Marine Band.

PR: Yeah, so there are just a couple of bands out there that are more safe than others and they know it.

WPT: Yeah, but they also have something in the military called over-strength, Every band has a certain number of people in the band and I know that both of those bands are more overstaffed than us. So, it's not that those bands are going to get disbanded or deployed or lose their jobs when the contract is over but I think they probably have just as much danger of being cut. So, [the people deciding the budget and aren't musicians] may say that we have to cut ten percent off of the top and get rid of people. I think that is just as likely for them as it is for us.

PR: That's exactly right. They may say can't you just turn the band into a rock band, a brass quintet, and a woodwind quintet.

WPT: Exactly. They are not musicians talking. So, they are going to say, “We need to cut five people and since you have a lot of clarinet’s, let’s cut one of them.” No it’s more likely that they will cut somebody at the end of their contract or something like that.

PR: So, they aren’t very good about giving instructions on how to cut the numbers. All they care is that you cut them.

WPT: Yeah, exactly. It’s a numbers game and people who are intelligent but don’t know why an ensemble is or the way it is or anything like that.

PR: So, in other words somebody says, “You have 50 people in your band but we need you to only have 40. It’s your job to figure out how to do it and we don’t care how.”

WPT: Yeah. “We don’t care how you do it. Just do it.”

PR: Have you noticed a drop in personnel? So in other words, has there been any time when someone got out and you weren’t allowed to fill their position?

WPT: That hasn’t happened yet but it is going to happen.<sup>448</sup> We’ve had nine or ten new people come in and that includes the support staff like the supply, publicity, and sound people. So, several people have come in and taken other people’s positions except for the publicity person. That is just a new position. The supply person took another person’s position. There was a singer and other spots also. So, there have been nine or ten new people in the band but only one new position. Right now they are looking to cut two spots from the band. So, what they are looking at is, for example, a clarinet player just retired and I don’t think they are going to fill that position. Plus a euphonium player is about to retire and they are trying to not fill that position either. So, they are trying to cut back where they can. In other words it hasn’t happened yet but it definitely is in the works.

PR: According to your current roster, you only have two euphonium players right now. If one retires and that spot isn’t filled then you will only have one spot.

WPT: Yeah and that stinks because a lot of the reasons that we need say two euphoniums and three tuba players is for the marching things. People simply need a break eventually. The euphonium player who is going to retire eventually in the near future, he’s been in the band for over twenty-five years and hasn’t been marching for the past year because he had surgery. So, the other euphonium player does everything that is marching. The problem with them saying that they don’t want to open that spot when the older guy retires is that the non-retiring euphonium player can’t say, “Hey, I can’t march this alone,” because he has been doing it alone for a year now. So, it’s one of those things that is not going to be easy but if we have to do it then we have to do it. It’s obviously not a

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<sup>448</sup> As of Fall 2012, there have been several positions that were not filled after the position was vacated.



good idea to have only one euphonium player. If he's sick or hurts himself then they are just going to have to pay somebody else to come in and sub. It's a bad thing. The clarinets can take the hit but there really is no good place in the band. If I had to cut somebody, maybe they think a tuba spot would be perfect. So, I'm nervous because my enlistment is up soon. So, I have to be careful. I'm always showing up early. My uniform is perfect because I don't want them to come and say, "Where else can't we get rid of someone? I know. There are three tubas. Why do we need three tubas? Let's get rid of somebody." Then there is a good chance that might be me. So, they are just looking and there really is no good place to take from.

PR: Is there ever a time when all three tuba players have to play at the same time?

WPT: Yes. For almost any concert band function as well marching band football games, parades, and reviews

PR: I guess that's what I mean. That is job security in itself. If you have to be there. I bet it's a struggle when one can't make it because of sickness or something like that.

WPT: ...Sometimes it can be rough because we might have a funeral and then something else later in the day.

PR: So, do you split it up so that only two tuba players have to play one a gig or do all three have to play every time?

WPT: Right. If there are two things in one day and we are able to without hurting the performance then we'll split it up. So, we alternate for anything that is sousaphone and marching and anything that is sit down with a tuba. All the sections do that because it gets to be a lot. For example, last year [two of the tuba players] were on profile meaning they couldn't march for the season.<sup>449</sup> So, [the other tuba player] didn't get anything off. That is tough. To have two sousaphones is very tough to handle. When something like that happens you are constantly getting slammed especially when there are funerals and ceremonies happening at the same time. It can get so crazy busy. Plus the sousaphone makes it very physically demanding. Fortunately there are three.

PR: Making sure you are indispensable is very useful for job security.

WPT: Exactly. Have your hands in everything so that they need you.

PR: Do you play with any other bands or bring anyone in to play with you. Let's say, for example that you don't fill the clarinet spot that you were talking about but you need a

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<sup>449</sup> See Appendix A for definition of profile.

clarinet to play something. Do you bring someone in from the civilian world or maybe get someone from Ft. Drum<sup>450</sup> or some other band in the military to come play with you?

WPT: Yeah that happens. A lot of the time we have civilians subs and other times we have gotten people from [another military band]. Like for example we recently just had a horn player who had a baby. Usually it is civilians but we have had several times where we've have different people from other bands come and sub with us. We don't necessarily collaborate for concerts with whole entire other bands but yeah we use their players and they have used ours as well.

PR: Is it common for people who are already in the military to audition for the West Point Band?

WPT: It's not uncommon. I mean, for this last trumpet audition there was a trumpet from one of the other bands. In our band right now, we have a flute player that was from one of the other bands. We also have a horn player that was from a Marine band. A bassoon player is from one of the Air Force bands. Plus an oboe player and some of the other players are from several of the Army bands. So, it's somewhat common.

PR: So in other words, even if they don't win a position, it's very possible to audition for your band?

WPT: Yeah and it's not exactly a huge bonus. I mean, if somebody else plays better, they aren't exactly going to care if you are in the Army. But if it can be a deciding factor...because sometimes it's hard to make a decision. So, if they both play great but this person knows what it's like to play in the Army and you therefore know that there isn't going to be any surprises for them or us then it could be a deciding factor.

PR: Especially if they are coming from the Army. It's a direct transfer. There is no basic training or anything.

WPT: Yeah. There is no basic training. You're right. Plus they know what to expect. There is going to be a lot less culture shock.

PR: Do you find yourself doing a lot of performances for other branches? For example, earlier you mentioned that you played on the Intrepid. That seems like it would normally be more of a Navy Band type of thing. Do you find yourself doing things with the Navy or for the Navy or other branches?

WPT: Not really.

PR: I didn't think so but I've been surprised in these interviews before so...

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<sup>450</sup> Fort Drum is a base in Jefferson County, New York.

WPT: We don't really collaborate with the other branches. We'll collaborate with the New York Phil or something. It seems like we should do more with the other bands but we don't.

PR: That makes sense actually because every band has their own domain and their own schedule of responsibilities. But do you do some of the things that a lot of the other premier bands do like playing for the inauguration?

WP: No. That's more a responsibility for the D.C. bands.

PR: Exactly my point. As a premier band, your realm is completely unrelated to a lot of the other premier bands.

WP: Right.

PR: I think that covers everything. Is there anything that you would like to add because my ultimate goal is to represent each band as best as I can and as accurately as I can meanwhile bringing out what makes each band unique. So, if you have anything to add you can but I think that covers all of questions.

WPT: I will look up some of the questions that we talked about that I wasn't completely sure about but I think we covered everything.

PR: Well, thank you for your time. I appreciate all your help in this.

*The U.S. "Pershing's Own" Army Band Phone Interview, 20 September 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two parts to this interview. The first part of it will be spent discussing what the audition process is like for your band. Then I'd like to go over what the musical and military responsibilities are. So my first question is what are the audition procedures for the "Pershing's Own" band nowadays?

U.S. "Pershing's Own" Army Band Tuba Player (POT): Well, the audition procedures have changed significantly. Most recently, the change has been that when we have an opening, we will send an announcement out in the *International Musician*<sup>451</sup> and we'll send announcements out to colleges and universities. Then we will have a live audition, which means everybody shows up and we have as many rounds as necessary to try to identify if someone is the right fit for the job. Then if they are, we offer it to them. Now the "cattle call", having everyone show up is a relatively new thing. Most of the time, that I've been here, we did a taped round and we'd only invite say a dozen or so people to the live audition. That is because the Army used to pay people's way to come out. So, ten or twelve people would be invited and we would pay your way. And we would also make sure that before you came to the live audition that you could pass the basic requirements for military service. So, once we got around a dozen people here at Fort Meyers,<sup>452</sup> then we could offer them the job without worrying about whether or not they were going to go back and find out that they had a medical condition that would bar them from service. But about six years ago, our audition process changed significantly when we got a new Commander. He decided that it would be better if we just went ahead and had everyone just show up and not pay for everybody to come. Then we could just do a live audition. And at that time, we also started separating how we were auditioning for the groups as well because it used to be that we would audition in house for certain jobs and out of the building for others. What happens now is that auditions include both in house and people that were civilians for pretty much every job that is open.

PR: So, now it is not a requirement to get medically approved before you come and audition?

POT: That is correct. Now with that being said, I haven't run an audition in over five years, so I haven't been intimately involved with the most recent auditions. But from

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<sup>451</sup> According to the official website, the *International Musician* is the "Official Journal of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada," which is a labor union for musicians in Canada and the United States. "International Musician," 24 September 2011, accessed 24 September 2011, <http://internationalmusician.org/>.

<sup>452</sup> Fort Myers is the Army post for a number of ceremonial units. It is located beside Arlington Cemetery in Arlington, VA.

what I understand, since we are having a “cattle call” and just letting everyone show up then we are not running people through all of that before they get here.

PR: What types of music are they required to play? Is it primarily excerpts and sight-reading or is there solo...

POT: We haven’t done one in the last couple of years, but all the auditions that I have happened since I was in the band involve a solo of choice which is typically what we start with. So, bring a solo of your choice that you think best represents you. Then we have a prepared solo that we send out so everybody has to play the same stuff. We typically like to find something that is either new to the repertoire or not well known but will have some difficulty to it. And then there is sight-reading. In the initial round, we really want to hear more of the solo that you bring and the prepared solo and/or the other music that we send you. Then as we get later, it turns into more sight-reading.

PR: So as the audition goes on, the sight-reading becomes more and more important?

POT: Correct.

PR: Are there excerpts involved?

POT: No. We’ve never sent out excerpts in a tuba audition. The excerpts that we use are all sight-reading. So, you’ll play plenty of excerpts in one of the tuba auditions at “Pershing’s Own” but they are not going to be ones that we send out or tell you about in advance. The only thing you are going to know is to bring a solo of choice. Prepare this piece of music which invariably has never been excerpts for us. It’s always been another solo or something else like an etude. So, we’ve sent out prepared music but it is not band excerpts. That is used as sight-reading.

PR: So, if there are about three rounds in the audition, because that has seemed to be typical with most of these interviews, and they make it into the band the next step is to go through the whole in-processing in the military. So, that means going to MEPS<sup>453</sup> and correct me if I’m wrong but it also includes basic training?

POT: That is right. They would have to go to MEPS. They would go to a recruiter with the paper work that we gave them for enlistment in the military specialty that puts you in this band. Then they would go to MEPS and be scheduled a date to go to basic training. Then they would go to basic training. Actually, they only go through the first half of the initial training for what most soldiers consider basic training. Then most people have to go through what is known as AIT or Advanced Individual Training.<sup>454</sup> So, that is the

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<sup>453</sup> See Appendix A for more information on MEPS.

<sup>454</sup> See Appendix A for more information on AIT.

point in which an individual coming to our band finishes their initial training and comes here. So, you don't really go through the entire process that a regular person that is enlisting in the Army would go through. Once you finished the basic training part, which I think is about 9 weeks, everybody that you went to basic training with is going on to more training and you are coming to the band because the Army treats you as if you don't need any more training.

PR: So, how do you get some of the advanced training like the specifics of drill for certain ceremonies? How do you get that training?

POT: That's all on the job training here. When you get here we typically assign somebody to be your sponsor. So, if you are new to the band then someone who will be working with you and knows your instrument and knows what you are supposed to be doing is assigned to put their arm around you, get you your uniforms, and make sure that you are set up. So, it's basically on the job training. Once you get your uniforms and equipment then you will go out with your sponsor to observe ceremonies and see how they are done. Then you might go out on a couple of parade dry runs, etc. So, you just learn here because not everything we do is how they teach at the school of music and there are a lot of things that are unique here. So, if we send someone to the school of music invariable half of what they learned there, we would end up changing it when they got here.

PR: Plus a lot of what you learn at the school of music is related to things you learned while getting your bachelor's degree. So, if you have a bachelor's degree most of the school of music becomes redundant. I would imagine that most people that get into a premier band have at least a bachelor's degree at that point.

POT: Yep.

PR: How is the "Pershing's Own" Band structured? Does everyone fall under one unit and that divides into smaller groups or is it more like the band is made up of multiple groups that all have smaller groups of their own?

POT: Well, there is one unit with one commander. We just got a new one so like when you asked about the audition process. It is likely to change somehow because we are under new leadership. But it's one unit with one commander and then we have groups or performing elements. So, we have the Concert Band, the Ceremonial Band, the Army Strings, the Army Chorus, a pop rock group called Down Range, and things like a brass quintet. These are all elements that are part of the Army Band. Each of them has a separate group leader and commission officer in charge of them. It's all the same unit but there are definitely different groups and all the jobs are assigned to certain groups. So, if it's your group's job then you get involved in it. If not then you're not involved. I mean,

obviously the chorus does a lot of missions that somebody in the Army Blues would not be involved in and vice versa.

PR: So as a tuba player, you could find yourself in just about any group that has a tuba player in it? I mean, I know there are some bands that split it up. So, for example, the marching band might have their own set of tuba players the concert band would have their own set of tuba players. So, you might help out the other group but you are primarily focused on that one band.

POT: That is how we do it. I mean, we are split like that. So, I could be in the Concert Band. Then that would be my job. The way it has been in the past five or six years, the Concert Band only does Concert Band jobs unless the Ceremonial Band needs help with ceremonies. Then we might be assigned as an extra tuba to that ceremony. We call that *plussing*. So, if there was a retirement parade and they need four tubas and let's say somebody is on leave or on light duty<sup>455</sup> meaning that the band only has three. So, they would write "plus one," on the job sheet. Then the concert band would have to give them one to do that job for that day. Now the way it has been run, the Ceremonial Band has not been allowed to substitute within the Concert Band because that was a policy of the previous commander who just left. I don't know if that policy is going to continue. Prior to that, people in the Ceremonial Band would substitute into the Concert Band or the Army Blues and even though people are assigned to a specific group we could borrow or exchange people on a temporary basis without any problem. Our most recent commander did not like that policy so the Concert Band was not allowed to have somebody from the Ceremonial Band or the Army Blues cover them. But, like I said, we just got a new commander and I have no idea what he thinks about that because we are not having rehearsals right now. We are doing another show and in the middle of other stuff. So yeah, we are split into very distinct elements. So, if you are in the Ceremonial Band, then that is your job but invariably there are missions that come up and jobs which require us to borrow people from one group or another and that is typically not a big deal.

PR: So, looking at your roster, I think I counted nine tuba players but only four are in the concert band.<sup>456</sup>

POT: That's right. There are four in the Concert Band and five in the Ceremonial Band.

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<sup>455</sup> Light duty is a medical situation similar to being put on profile which can be better defined in Appendix A. Light duty usually means that the soldier in question has limitations to a part of their duty. It might be that he/she cannot lift anything above a certain weight, can only work in an office or, have a limit to the length of work he/she can do for a designated period of time that usually coincides with physical therapy and the pre-determined healing time for whatever medical condition may be occurring.

<sup>456</sup> "The United States Army Band 'Pershing's Own'," 24 September 2011, [www.usarmyband.com](http://www.usarmyband.com).

PR: How does it work as far as splitting up into chamber groups? Do both bands have a brass quintet for example?

POT: Well, right now there is one official brass quintet in the entire Army Band. It is made up of players from all of the... I mean, of the five players in the quintet, there are a couple guys from the Concert Band, a couple guys from the Ceremonial Band, and a guy from the Blues. They are made up of people from all the different groups. So, we only have one. Now that might change with our new commander. In addition, even though we only officially have one, the amount of jobs that we have come in that we end up using a brass quintet on is way more than what just one group of five can handle. So, we are invariably sending out a ton of ad hoc brass quintets that are just a mix of either element, Concert Band, Ceremonial Band, or whatever.

PR: So, the chamber groups will kind of pick personnel and choose from wherever but the larger groups stick solely to their groups.

POT: Yeah. That is correct.

PR: On a related note, how does having the Field Band, in other words another premier band in Washington D.C. in the Army affect your job?

POT: Well, not much really. We never see them because their job is everywhere but here. They are a traveling element for the Army so the only time they are not working is when they are at Fort Meade.<sup>457</sup> When they are working then they are traveling. So, we do all the work in the National Capital region and they play all the shows outside of town. We really don't interact with them much. They fall under a different command in the Army. They are under the recruiting command and we are under the adjutant general command through the Chief of Staff of the Army. So, we have a different chain of budget, authority and everything else. We are an element that is attached to the military district of Washington D.C. which is the official ceremonial element of the Army. They are connected to the recruiting command so they travel and do their own thing. We really don't have the same area of emphasis at all. Plus they are based at Fort Meade which is a little bit closer to Baltimore than it is to Washington D.C. anyways and they are not required to do much work around the D.C. area anyways so we almost never run into them. I mean, they travel a lot.

PR: I guess that is what I mean. Does it affect your travel? Do you spend all of your time around Washington D.C. and not traveling much at all?

POT: We don't travel very much. I don't think that is specifically because of the Field Band. The big difference is that we are not required to do some type of tour like the other

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<sup>457</sup> Fort Meade, MD.



D.C. bands do. So because the Field Band tours all of the time, there is no requirement on us to do a tour. It doesn't really preclude our traveling other than from a budgetary concern. Traveling is just a part of what we do. It has to be justified along with everything else we spend money on. So because traveling is not the number one priority like it is for the Field Band, we have to balance how much traveling that we do with the number of everything else that we are required to do. That being said, we do travel. We're scheduled to go to China in October and play three cities there, Beijing, Shanghais, and Nanjing. That's a pretty big deal. So, the band does travel. However, we always have jobs in D.C. that are going to need musical support because the places that we play around town don't travel. There is always going to be a portion of the band stuck at home doing funerals and arrivals around the D.C. area. So, travel is not the number one thing for our band. I don't think that the traveling of the Field Band really affects us unless of course we were both trying to go to the same place at the same time. Other than that, they do their thing and we do ours and we typically don't step on each other's toes.

PR: Do you find yourself doing more ceremonies though, perhaps covering things that are at their base?

POT: Yeah we do, though they are not really a band at a post like you would think of a post military band. I mean, they happen to be stationed at Fort Meade but yeah we've done ceremonies at Fort Meade and it's a little awkward in a sense that we're doing the ceremonies and they are out doing whatever they are doing...most of our ceremonies are at the Cemetery, the Pentagon, at the White House, or somewhere else around D.C. So, we don't really rely on the Field Band to do ceremonies. Everything in the national capital region, which extends all the way from Fort Hamilton, New York down to Norfolk or Fort Lee, Virginia or somewhere down there. There are a lot of posts that are included in the military district of Washington D.C. and we support ceremonial stuff at all of those places.

PR: This question might be moot but do you find yourself trading or using any of their personnel or other band's personnel?

POT: It's very rare. We may have let them borrow our harpist for a little while when they didn't have one. But no, there is not a regular basis in which we trade personnel. In emergency situations, we might loan a player for about a month or less.

PR: Okay. That is the same answer I have been getting from everyone but I didn't know if that was the same for the Army since there are two premier bands beyond the Academy band.

POT: That being said, we do have a decent amount of personnel in the “Pershing’s Own” Band that used to be in the Field Band. They auditioned for the “Pershing’s Own” Band just like anyone else would audition for the “Pershing’s Own” and were accepted here.

PR: So, auditioning from band to band, even active duty bands is encouraged?

POT: Yes though in our auditions, they are treated the same as anybody else.

PR: I assume, at least initially, the auditions are sort of blind anyways.

POT: Yeah, the last two auditions that we held were blind the whole time. Sometimes they pull the screen down for the final round but we haven’t done that with the tubas.

PR: Do people in your band have administrative responsibilities?

POT: No. With that being said, there are a lot of people in the band that do have collateral duties but there isn’t a standard somewhere that says, “When you get here you have to have some other job.” I mean, we have regular Army personnel and civilians that work in our personnel office. We have civilian drivers that do our transportation. We have a library staff that works in the library. Now we might assign somebody from the concert band to be a liaison with our music library. So, it’s the person in the concert band that connects with them. Our supply people are supply people. They aren’t doubling as people in the band. Our support people are members of the unit but they are not doubling as musicians.

PR: So, if there is no requirement for the musicians to do these duties, why do some of them do it?

POT: That is because all of our promotions are in house. We have a set number of slots and we compete against each other for those slots. And because some people stay in the unit a long time, it can take a long time to get promoted and then it can be difficult for the promotion board to make sense of who to promote. So recently, there has been a lot of weight given to the amount of things that people volunteer for as extra jobs when it comes to promotion times. So, that’s encouraged people to take on more work.

PR: I am assuming your band is like all the other bands and has physical fitness and body image requirements.

POT: Yes.

PR: Is it an organized thing or is it kind of your own responsibility?

POT: The Army Physical Fitness Test<sup>458</sup> is administered twice a year by our unit. We do have an organized PT class<sup>459</sup> but it's not a requirement for anyone to attend unless they have either failed the body fat standard, failed a portion of the PT test or been called out by the commander for appearance. If one of those things happens then you have to attend the PT class which meets every morning. On the other hand, if you haven't failed and don't have a problem then the only requirement is to pass the PT test which is given twice a year. Plus we have four quarterly weigh-ins, one at each PT test plus one in between [the PT tests]. So, if you pass the weigh-in and body fat standards and pass the PT test then you don't have to go to class. If you fail you do go to class and sometimes your section leader or supervisor goes with you. We have in the past in order to try and encourage people to not fail.

PR: I can see that being good incentive.

POT: Plus you can pass all of that and still have to go to class because the commander's discretion includes your appearance based on his opinion. So, even if you pass the body fat standard, if the commander says that he doesn't like the way you look in uniform then you are considered to be not in compliance. So, you might have to go to class anyways and you might be subjected to additional weight screenings. In addition, if you fail a weight standard, your records are also flagged and you are not eligible for any favorable action during that time. You can't be promoted. You can't get any bonuses or re-enlist or anything while you are under the weight control program. Thankfully because there is a lot of incentives to not fail and not have a problem, our unit has a really good record probably because the last two commanders put a lot of emphasis on it and our new commander is about to put even more emphasis on it. So, we really haven't had much trouble with people failing the standard and we've been lucky with that.

PR: Can we go back to the questions about traveling for a second. You mentioned that you are about to head off to China. How much travel do you do a year? I would imagine that is a little less since the Army has more premier bands than other branches.

POT: Yeah. It's less but it changes all the time. I mean, we have a portion of the band that is traveling right now. There is a show called "Spirit of America" and this is a show that is put on by the military district of Washington. It's not really an Army Band show; it is an Army show. It uses the Army Drill Team and the Fife and Drum Corps and some dramatic elements within the Army Band, etc. It's a three week deal. They did a week here in D.C. They did a week in Charleston, South Carolina. And right now they are in Jacksonville, Florida. So, they do it in whatever the big arena is in town. That is a three week trip and we all need about half of the band to go and half the band to stay. This has

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<sup>458</sup> The Army usually abbreviates this as APFT and is defined in Appendix A

<sup>459</sup> PT stands for physical training and is defined in Appendix A.

kind of become an every other year type of thing. I went last year and we went to Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Grand Rapids. This year, I am home covering whatever is left to do here, mostly ceremonies. Then next year, who knows where we will go, and I will be on that. But yeah, we are going to China in October and of course we are also going to Mid-west in December. Next Spring we are talking about going to Norway. Then on Fourth of July we travel. This past Fourth of July we played in Philadelphia. The year before that we were up in New England. So, I guess a lot of our travel is centered around a certain event or a conference. We'll go to the MENC<sup>460</sup> conference and play or we'll go for Fourth of July and play. You know, a lot of specific event-type traveling. We almost never schedule a tour of just the band hitting cities around here and there, although there is talk about doing something like that in the spring with our new commander here. So, as far as how much traveling, I couldn't say other than to say every couple of months we will go somewhere for a few days and play.

PR: To summarize, it sounds as if there are very few long trips where the whole band is gone for two or three weeks but there are a lot of organized shorter trips where portions of the band will perform for a couple days for a specific function and then return home.

POT: Yes. It is very rare for us to do anything other than...like our China trip is a joint diplomatic exchange between China and the United States. The Chinese band came here in May and we performed at the Kennedy Center, Philadelphia, the Lincoln Center, and at the UN. So, what we are doing in October is a reciprocal event. We are going over there to do the same thing. And that will be joint concerts with their band. But as for a trip that involves the entire band being gone for more than a few days at a time that is incredibly rare.

PR: Speaking of going overseas, I wasn't asking this question and I wish I had because I found out another band does have to do this, are you eligible to deploy?

POT: Well, yes. We have sent a group with the Sergeant Major of the Army USO tour every holiday season for the last seven or eight years. So every November and December, we send a rock group with the USO, Sergeant Major of the Army tour which has entertainers, comedians, football cheerleaders, etc. and they tour Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait for about three weeks.

PR: So, it's not an extended tour where you there for six months to a year or anything.

POT: No. None of the people in our band have done that. Our experiences are just for a few weeks at a time and are mostly through associated with that trip. The band hasn't been deployed in a capacity like what you are talking about since World War II.

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<sup>460</sup> MENC is the national organization for music educators.

PR: I have one final question. Do you notice any trends in the Army? What I mean, is that I've noticed in a couple of the other branches they are going through a number of money crunching issues where they have either had to down-size or had their premier band status threatened. Is there anything like that happening to the "Pershing's Own" band?

POT: Well, not specifically yet. Obviously, the Army is going through budget crunching just like the rest of the Department of Defense and it's probably going to continue for a while. I mean, it seems like these wars are drawing down so the Department of Defense is going to have to tighten the belt. Other than just an overall smaller budget than what we have had in previous years, we haven't been threaten with losing any kind of status or losing any personnel but I know there is a lot of scrutiny on what we are doing. I know our new commander specifically mentioned that. He spends a lot of time making sure the Army knows why we are relevant and why we are important and why we matter. And you know in reality it's hard to predict that kind of thing because the Army changes things over night. I remember a time not too long ago when I walked in the building and they said, "Oh by the way, the retirement age is not 55 anymore. It's 62." It can happen without any warning. So, I don't know. It's possible that they could walk in and tell us that we are going to lose said number of slots but I think the people running the band are preparing for whatever the new budgets might be. That being said, we have not been given any kind of timeline to reduce personnel or missions. We just have less money to spend on things we used to spend it on and that's pretty much the way it's been for the past couple of years. I know that there is a lot of upheaval in other bands that probably have to do with, like the Air Force is going through a lot of stuff, and that is affecting all the bands including the band here in Washington D.C. But so far we've been fortunate in that regard. Like I said we have less money to spend on instruments and things but overall we still have the same number of personnel and they haven't messed with our T.O.E.<sup>461</sup> yet. Our new commander is here and he will probably shift the numbers inside the unit as to how many people we have in the Concert Band, Ceremonial Band, etc. He has different ideas as to where we should be using our assets so he might change the size of different groups and the number of slots that we are using for things but that is going to be in house stuff. I don't think it will be dictated by the Army.

PR: I think that pretty much covers everything but since I'm trying to as accurately as possible depict each band, if there is anything that I've missed or anything that you think we should have discussed, I'd like to hear about it.

POT: Well, I'm just trying to think of the things that make "Pershing's Own" unique. The band was ordered into existence by John J. "Black Jack" Pershing after World War I

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<sup>461</sup> T.O.E. is defined in Appendix A.

when he traveled over there. He saw a lot of European military bands and he thought the Army in America should also have its own band. So, he ordered us into existence in a very short memo that we have a copy of at the building and that was in 1922. We, of course, were the band that was able to get Hindemith to write the symphony that he wrote that is very famous.<sup>462</sup> That was because of a guest conducting experience that Hindemith was going to make with “Pershing’s Own” and he basically just wrote something to bring along with him for that opportunity. We are the only Washington D.C. premier band that has been deployed in both World War II and in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. As far as I know, none of the other [premier] bands have been deployed in a combat theater. In addition, we are the largest premier band. Other than the Marine Band, I think we’ve been around the longest of the premier bands and we handle most everything that happens in Arlington National Cemetery. It all pretty much defaults to us and actually almost every job in the area almost defaults to us. So, if any other band in the area can’t do it, we pretty much cover it because we have the most people and because the ceremonial operations around D.C. are ultimately handed to the military district of Washington which is run by the Army. So, we are pretty much a catchall for anything that is not specifically service indicated meaning if it doesn’t have to be the Air Force Band or if it doesn’t have to be the Marine Band and somebody can’t do it then we end up doing it. Our band leads every Inaugural Parade and that’s been the tradition since the inauguration of Calvin Coolidge. So, we are the very first element of every inauguration parade. We are the senior band of the senior service and it’s a great job.

PR: I know for myself because of things like the Army Tuba-Euphonium Conference,<sup>463</sup> the Army Band is usually the model of what I think of when I think about what a premier band is.

POT: Yeah, and we are the only one of the D.C. bands that is not in D.C. I mean, we are in Virginia and the other bands are in the District proper. We used to be the only ones with our own concert hall. We are also supposed to be getting a new hall in a few years. They picked out the land but they haven’t built the building yet. Plus we have a brand new commander which is probably going to change things.

PR: Would you say that since you are taking so many of the general jobs that the other bands don’t take, in your opinion, does that make your band busier than the other D.C. bands?

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<sup>462</sup> Hindemith, Paul. *Symphony in B flat for Concert Band*. Schott & Co. LTD, London, England, 1951.

<sup>463</sup> The Army Tuba-Euphonium Conference happens annually in the last weekend of January at Bruckner Hall, the rehearsal and performance hall for the United States “Pershing’s Own” Army Band at Fort Myer, Arlington, VA.

POT: There is no question that our work load is higher than any of the other bands. We definitely do more jobs and more missions than anybody. And that starts with Arlington Cemetery. I mean, we have people doing jobs and going out and playing Taps for simple honors and for every wreath laying that happens at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. For all of that we have people there playing Taps. So, there is no question that for the total number of commitments by “Pershing’s Own” is higher than any other premier band in D.C. Now with that said we are also the biggest band so we should be the highest but even in proportion to that it still...per capita or per musician, we’d still be higher. We are also the most versatile band also. We have the Herald Trumpets. Nobody else has that. We have an all male chorus which nobody else has. We have the Strolling Strings which the Marines also have but we put it together to make a full orchestra. We have Down Range. We have the Army Blues Jazz Ensemble. Of course we also have the brass quintet. So, I think we are easily the most versatile group in town. Our mission load is way higher than everybody else and we pretty much cover everything that isn’t covered or doesn’t have to be covered by somebody else. And I think the band takes a certain amount of pride in being there when nobody else can be there. In addition we helped in the recovery effort at the Pentagon after 9/11. Our band’s specific job was to make credentials and I.D.’s for the people that were going into the rubble to do the clean out. They decided that anybody that was going to help there needed to have a separate credential made at the crash site. No one was going to be let in simply based off of who they were. So, the secret service has a mobile I.D. system where you can make people I.D. cards on site. We set up in a tent right outside the crash site area there and 24 hours a day we had people from “Pershing’s Own” sitting there at computers. If somebody came in, the secret service would direct us on what kind of I.D. to make for them and we’d make the I.D. and send them out the door. Then about three weeks after 9/11 we went to New York City and played a memorial service. It was a Sunday and we set up right there at ground zero. It was the first time that they stopped all of the recovery equipment since the attacks. All the workers came over and we did a Sunday service with the mayor and all of the rescue workers and we have a lot of photos and videos of that. So, the band has been a part of a lot of historical things. But I mentioned 9/11 because we just played at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony at the Pentagon a couple weeks ago on Sunday. It was a moving ceremony.

PR: What you just described is a lot like what I had to do when I was deployed to Iraq or at least what I had to do during the invasion. I was there in 2003 when we actually invaded and that sounded a lot like what I had to do when I was deployed so as far as I’m concerned spending all that time basically at ground zero is a deployment to me.

POT: Yeah. It was a memorable time that is for sure.

PR: I bet. Well, I appreciate all of your time with me. This has been very useful.

*The Air Force Academy Band Phone Interview, 20 September 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two parts to the interview. The first part is basically the process for auditioning to your band and the second half is about the military and musical responsibilities that you have to do once in the band. Now before we get into this too much, can you clarify something for me? I've been hearing a lot of rumors that the Air Force Academy Band has either lost its premier band status or that those in charge are trying to stop that from happening. Is any of that true?

Air Force Band Tuba Player (AFAT): Our premier band status has officially been removed. So, we are a regional band much like any of the other bands across the Air Force. The only premier band that exists [in the Air Force] is in Washington D.C.

PR: So, how does that affect your band when you are, for example, getting new personnel?

AFAT: Basically, say someone is going to another band, most of the time we'll end up swapping with the person they are going to replace. So, say I get orders to go to Germany. Well the person in Germany will come to Colorado Springs and take my spot here and I would take his spot there. If we are lacking in...for example, right now we are lacking in rhythm section personnel. Then we'll actually have an audition much like all the other bands do. The difference is, when they get here they are not arriving as E-6's anymore. They are coming in as E-3's much like the rest of the regional band system.<sup>464</sup>

PR: When all of this happened, did a lot of you initially have to take demotions or anything?

AFAT: No we were able to keep our rank and our time in service and all of that. So, there were no demotions as far as rank and pay goes. Even our mission has pretty much stayed the same. It's really just been the title that has gone away.

PR: Ok. There has been a lot of heresy going around and...

AFAT: It's not heresy though. It's fact. If you can believe this, we were notified last year on April Fool's Day. We were notified then but nothing went into effect until October of that year.

PR: Has there been a drop in personnel or anything like that? Have a lot of people left and gone to other places

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<sup>464</sup> The military rank/rating system as well as an example of the pay system found in the military can be found in Appendix A.



AFAT: Some people have taken the opportunity to advance their careers in the Air Force and transferred to other bands. Most of the loss that we've had though really has been to retirements. On the other hand, some of the slots that were vacated because of retirements and other things the band chose not to refill them. So, for example, we used to have two tuba slots now we only have one.

PR: You have to be very busy. As someone who was prior service, my bands always had three tuba players in them and we were always pretty busy. I couldn't imagine being the entire tuba section.

AFAT: Yes, it can be....Well, right now the concert band is kind of taking a break. Our commander has...we kind of got dealt a raw deal. He knows that and so he's been saying something like, "I know you all have been going hard ever since. Why don't we take a break?" So, he cancelled our concert band tour that we are supposed to have coming up next month. Instead, he is going to send out the brass quintet, the woodwind quintet, and [various other smaller groups]. So, it's been ok. I mean obviously, with our numbers dwindling and everything else, we cannot operate at the same level that we once before.

PR: In my interviews, I've gotten the impression that the Air Force regional bands function, in a lot of ways, like the premier bands anyways. In the other branches, I think if this had happened, it would be far more dramatic.

AFAT: It would. I mean the Academy Band has always functioned like a regional band. What I mean is we all have additional duties. We have other things that we have to do on top of playing music that sometimes takes the front seat to the music. It kind of goes back and forth but we pretty much have done the same things that many of the regional bands have done. I can say this, only because I was in a regional band.... So, the similarities between going to the regional system and to the premier system, especially at the band here, it was pretty much the same thing. I wasn't surprised that when I got here that I had a desk and I had stuff to do...

PR: Okay, I'm glad we discussed that. I mean, like I said, I had heard a lot of things from a lot of other branches and I can't trust them even if what they are saying is true until I actually hear it from a person who is involved in the situation. I definitely want to avoid assuming anything. So, now that we have finished discussing that, let me get to the heart of this interview. My first question is what is the audition process like for the Academy Band?

AFAT: The audition process for the Academy band is much like the audition process for any other band especially since being reclassified as a regional band. Depending on who's running the audition, there will be some scales involved. There is prepared music and sight-reading. Now, if a player comes in and they obviously have control over their

instrument then the scales might go out the window but sometimes it is used to weed out the less stronger players by doing some scales first. I mean you don't have to play all of them. They'll just pick and choose whichever one they feel like. And then from there you go on to the prepared excerpts and there might be a solo involved. After that if, for example, you are a horn player and they are looking to fill a horn spot in the woodwind quintet then they might have some prepared stuff with the woodwind quintet. Plus there might be some sight-reading with the woodwind quintet as well.

PR: Do people send in a tape first? How do they first start this audition process?

AFAT: Usually there is a taped portion but recently we have been kind of going away from that. I'm not really sure why but I know from all the flyers that there hasn't been a taped round at all. I'm not sure why they are going away from that but that's how my band has been doing it. I'm not sure how any of the other bands are.

PR: I can't speak for all of the bands but some of the bands are doing a tape and some aren't. The bands that aren't doing the tape say it's because sometimes you end up eliminating people in the tape round that are good players because they had a bad tape and sometimes you get people that know how to edit really well that aren't necessarily good players. So, it's a way of making sure you get the best player possible.

AFAT: And that is very true. Now what tends to happen is somebody calls up and wants to do a screening and they will do the screening there. Because a lot of times there are things like resumes and the Air Force have things like age requirements that need to be met so if you are over 35 for example, we will stop them right there because the Air Force has an age limit that says you cannot enlist if you are, I think it's 35 years old.

PR: Yes as long as you are brand new to the military.

AFAT: Exactly

PR: As far as the actual music though, you said scales, excerpts, and maybe a solo. Is it all dictated by the band?

AFAT: It really depends upon the instrument. When I auditioned, it was pretty standard as far as what excerpts and solo will be played. I think in recent years, the band can...I mean, we have a list to choose from as far as certain excerpts here and certain excerpts there. The actual solo section portion of it is...I don't want to say pretty much do whatever you want to do because some bands actually require the Vaughan Williams *Tuba Concerto*, the Hindemith *Sonata* or something along those lines. Then other bands will say to play whatever puts your best foot forward.

PR: My concern here is with your particular band and what you have done in the past.

AFAT: When I auditioned for this band it was just play a solo.

PR: Whatever solo represents you the best.

AFAT: Exactly.

PR: In my previous Air Force interviews they said that any potential musician that wants to be in the Air Force should talk to a recruiter first and go through a quick examination to make sure that you are eligible for the military before you actually audition. Is that the case for your band also?

AFAT: I would have to say that would be the reverse for us. Obviously there is a physical side to our job that has to be met. If you are sure that you have the physical side of it, I would say to go ahead and take the audition. When I auditioned, I took the audition first and then went to see the recruiter. At that time I needed to lose about twenty pounds and at that point I had already lost about sixty so twenty more pounds wasn't that big of an issue. So, I did the footwork before I took the audition and I was actually told that it is better to take the audition first and then go see the recruiter because recruiters are like used car salesmen. They'll say something like, "Oh you can do this? Well, we have a shortage over here." You know, they try to talk you into something besides what it is that you want to do. So, it is actually better to take the audition, win the job and in the Air Force they give you a form, I think it's a 425, and then go to you recruiter and go from there.

PR: Okay. That is pretty much what everyone else was saying except the other Air Force interviews. It probably varies from place to place and person to person depending on who you talk to.

AFAT: Right.

PR: As far as the actual responsibilities you have with your band, has any of that changed since you lost your premier status?

AFAT: No. We still have a national mission because we are tasked with recruiting for the Air Force Academy. Some bands will have geographic areas of responsibility so they will tour a couple things around where they are. We do have an area of responsibility around us but because we are attached to the Academy and because we are assigned to promote that academy business, we have another aspect of it to go all over the place. For instance, I've gone on tour to Florida, Texas, New York, Michigan, Indiana, and a couple of other places even though our geographic area, as it states on the paper is Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. But because we exist for the academy, we'll draw from places...there have actually been some places that have no congressional nominations because to get into the

academy you have to have a congressional nomination. So, we'll figure out what districts aren't being as represented as other districts and we'll go and put a face on the academy in that district. For instance, the brass quintet is going to Houston next month because Houston doesn't have a very strong academy presence up here. So, they'll send us down there and we'll play in some schools and a couple public concerts just to say, "Hey, this is another option up here."

PR: It sounds like you still can do a lot of traveling even though you are attached to the Air Force Academy. My impression has been that an academy band would spend most of its time at the academy playing for academy functions.

AFAT: Some of the other service academy bands do that and we do that as well. I mean that is definitely a part of our primary mission, [being] out there doing parades and academy functions and things of that nature but the academy has also seen what the band can do outside of the academy. In the past three years, we've had five incoming cadets say that they got their information because they came to one of our concerts.

PR: With that in mind, what are some typical things that you do performance-wise in the band?

AFAT: First and foremost, probably the biggest thing is marching. From the beginning of August to the beginning of October, the marching band is doing at least one parade at the academy a week. And then we'll take some time off from that and do our recruiting tours. Then in the spring, we are tasked with graduation. That includes graduation parades, award functions, and things of that nature. So, that's a big thing. Marching is a very key thing to what we do. It's also very visual. Other than that, obviously we'll do a Fourth of July Concert. We actually have a Fourth of July tour that we do here in Colorado. We have an Armed Forces week. There is always a parade for that and then there is a public concert downtown at the Performing Arts Center here in town. Of course we also do a holiday show during Christmas. Outside of that, there are promotion ceremonies and the brass quintets and a couple woodwind quintets might do those. Basically any other military function that goes on. Well, we don't do all of them because some of them we can't do. I can't speak to the legality of what we can and can't do. So, some of them we can and some of them we can't do whether it is because of legal reasons or schedule reasons. We also have a pretty strong community base. Like for example, we have a chamber recital series pretty much during the school year. Once a month we'll play at one of the local colleges here in town. So, this month for example we are doing a brass concert. We do one every year. Next month it will be actual individuals so there might be a clarinet, a flute, or various other instruments. It's a chance for us to kind of step away from playing Sousa and stuff that we have to play and we actually have the opportunity to play what we want to play. And it's a chance for us as musicians to really showcase our

individual talents and also play stuff that we really enjoy doing. Because, quite frankly, I'm sure the bassoon players probably don't necessarily enjoy playing Sousa and things of that nature but you know they love stuff like Puccini. So, that is a chance for them to play the stuff that they really enjoy.

PR: So, with their only being one tuba player, I would imagine that makes him very busy.

AFAT: Yes.

PR: What happens in a section like that which is very thin [already] when someone is sick or for whatever reason...

AFAT: It depends. Currently, let's stay with the marching band, actually one of our bass players plays tuba as well. So with most ceremonies, he and I will be out there together and if one falls out then there is still one there. Our euphonium player, who is also our drum major also plays tuba. So with marching band, one of those guys can fill in without any problem. Now say there is a concert band tour or a brass quintet tour, it can be a little bit more delicate. If it is anything last minute, they will first try to find someone in the career field, like a former member of the band to come out and augment the band and fill the spot. If they can't find anybody then they might end up hiring someone from the community. If all else fails, then it just doesn't happen. But a lot of times...in fact, there was one time for example, where the bass trombone player actually filled in for me because I had something else, whether it was sickness or injury. So, if it's something that is not necessarily high profile, then he might step in and read the book.

PR: Has there been situations in your band where something like this has been a bigger issue?

AFAT: For most of the sections it hasn't been an issue. The only sections where we are down to only one player are really just the tuba and euphonium. But a couple of the trombone players can play euphonium so they will actually step in and play it. Most of the other sections are two and three deep. So if, for example, the clarinet player from the woodwind quintet can't do a gig or something happens all of a sudden, they can pull somebody else in there and it's no problem.

PR: So, there is a tuba in the brass quintet, the ceremonial band, and the concert band. Are there any other musical opportunities for the tuba player?

AFAT: At one point there was a tuba-euphonium trio. That was basically a tuba, a euphonium player, and a drum set player. That existed for about a year.

PR: Was that primarily a jazz group?

AFAT: We pretty much would play anything. Pretty much all the arrangements were done by us and we had a wide variety of things that we could do, from the legit side of the house to the commercial side. It was pretty much whatever we wanted to play. It was just fun to play in. For example, we had an arrangement of Pat Matheny's *Letter from Home*, which is typically just guitar and piano but we did it with our drummer actually playing vibraphone on it. I think it came out really well. We did that and we also did stuff like Stars and Stripes, a Bach piece, and pretty much whatever else we wanted to do as long as we could get it to work for three voices. Plus we'd change things up because the euphonium player also plays trombone so he might play tenor on one and bass on another. Actually, we did an arrangement of *Bolero* and he played on all three during a performance. But when we lost a tuba player that group went away and the quintet started. Outside of that, there is a brass quartet that really comes out of the jazz band and the bass trombone player plays the fourth book<sup>465</sup> and sometimes if something comes up and he can't do it then the tuba player will go over there.

PR: So, it sounds like there is a possibility for groups to be put together that use a tuba but those three groups are the primary things that a tuba player in your band will play in.

AFAT: Very much so.

PR: Outside of your musical playing, what are some of your responsibilities? Do you have any collateral duties?

AFAT: Yes. Actually, I do...

PR: Are you required to do this or is it more about getting promoted?

AFAT: Some of it is required and some of it is not. A lot of times for me, there was a space that needed to be filled and they asked if I would mind doing it. I mean we are given the opportunity to say, "Yeah, sure. I'll do it." Or "No, that's not really my strong suit." But sometimes you are kind of volun-told, "We need to do this so this is what you are going to do." I mean it is the military so you are going to go where you are told and where the need is. But a lot of times they are going to try to put you in where your strengths are. However, for the sake of career progression they will on occasion say, "Ok, you've been over here for around ten years. Let's put you someplace else so you can get a sense of something else in the band."

PR: Has switching to a non-premier band affected that? For example, has the promotion rate changed?

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<sup>465</sup> The fourth book is the lowest part in the ensemble.

AFAT: Not really. I mean obviously, anything dealing with money looks good as far as promotions are concerned. At this particular point because we've lost so many people both through retirements or moving and things of that nature, some people have had to take on additional duties and that really has nothing to do with getting promoted. It has more to do with a job needing to be done.

PR: The only reason I asked that question was because in my other interviews all the premier bands said that their promotions happened within the band so now that you are a regional band, I was trying to figure out if your promotion is more Air Force-wide.

AFAT: Right, we are now promoting with the rest of the career field. Our last in-house promotion was with the last promotion cycle. Our next cycle will actually be much like they do in the rest of the Air Force.

PR: One final question related to this topic, is there any attempt to re-establish the premier band status or is everyone sort of satisfied with it?

AFAT: I don't know if anyone is satisfied with it. At this point, I think we have had to live with it for about a year. So, I'm not sure if the management is pushing for the premier reinstatement. Would it be nice? Sure. But in all honesty, what the Air Force needs the Air Force gets. So, if the Air Force feels that it doesn't need two premier bands then that's it. A lot of this comes from...the Pentagon and unfortunately once something is gone, it's really hard to get it back.

PR: The only reason I mentioned this question is because I am also hearing rumors that the Naval Academy Band is going through the same thing.

AFAT: Yes, they lost theirs and then they got it back.

PR: What I was told was that they accepted to not have their band be comprised of only E-6 and up and that they will take lower ratings now. I haven't confirmed this and that is my last interview I need to do.

AFAT: I hadn't heard that. Honestly, I'm not sure how they did it. I mean, we were notified and they were notified. Then they received theirs back and we didn't. I don't really know what happened. Maybe it's a proximity thing since they are closer to D.C. than we are so that they might have a little bit more of a direct voice than we do but in reality I'm just not sure how they did it. I mean, we have rumors on why we lost it and unfortunately all of those rumors have absolutely nothing to do with us. But as for the real reason, that remains unknown. All we know is that the Chief of Staff of the Air Force said that he didn't need two premier bands and that was it.

PR: Does the fact that you are the only academy band not on the east coast affect you at all?

AFAT: Not really.

PR: I guess it's different since losing the premier band status but you were the only premier band not on the east coast.

AFAT: Very true and I don't know how much that had to play into it. I'm sure it had some play because it's just like one of those things, you know, out of sight then out of mind sort of thing. But as far as how much it played into it? I don't even know. But I'm sure there was something along those lines to it.

PR: So, getting back to the collateral duties questions, are you required physical fitness and body image testing twice a year?

AFAT: Yes.

PR: Does your band have organized physical training or anything like that or is it kind of on your own?

AFAT: We do squadron PT once a week. The PT program is really commander driven. So, if the commander says that he wants to have squadron PT three times a week, then we have it three times a week. My current commander says that once a week is just fine. And the physical fitness of the band is pretty high so he doesn't see a reason to have it anymore than that. If someone is having trouble with the physical fitness then we'll pair him up with...I mean the band will help each other. I know that for a fact because after I had...surgery, I was struggling with that and I had plenty of help from within the unit to help me pass my pt test. So, we kind of take care of ourselves in that regard.

PR: You mentioned the traveling that the band does, about how much time do you actually spent away from the academy in a year?

AFAT: I would say the band probably spends a total of about two months out of the year.

PR: That is a significant amount of traveling.

AFAT: Well, it's also spread out and we're talking about the brass quintet will go one place and the rock group will go somewhere else. So, the total time for an average musician is about two months. Individually, I think I have spent about a month on the road this year sporadically and that is not only with my band. Like we talked about earlier, if something happens to the tuba player from another band and that band only has one tuba player then they might tap into the career field to help fill the spot temporarily.



So, if you include that into it, then yeah, it's about two months of travel depending on how long their tour is.

PR: I suspect the traveling has increased because of the shrinking of the Air Force bands nationwide down to the bands only really having one tuba.

AFAT: It has. A lot of the bands across the career field function with only one tuba player. So, there is a little bit of added pressure to stay healthy and not really having anything major happen. But unfortunately you can't predict things. This year, I haven't done much augmenting of other bands like I have in years past but that is not to say that that might not change. Now that I am the only tuba player in the band, our ability to augment another band is somewhat limited because if I go off with another band then the brass quintet here shuts down. There is nothing that they can do while I am gone. It was a lot easier to do when there were two tuba players here. One tuba player could be in the brass quintet and the other could be off doing something else. Now that I'm the only tuba player it doesn't happen much anymore but it can.

PR: In the other interviews with tuba players in the Air Force, I was told that their bands are deployable. Being at the academy, are you also deployable?

AFAT: Yes, very much so... Pretty much all the bands now are deployable. As a matter of fact, we just had a group come back in June and they were gone for about two months and that was the second time in about three years that that group had been deployed.

PR: I think that wraps up my questions. I'm trying to represent each branch and each band the best that I can. Is there anything that we haven't mentioned yet that you feel we should cover to best represent your band?

AFAT: I think you've covered all the bases.

PR: Then in that case, I appreciate your time and I want to thank you for all your help....

*The Naval Academy Band Phone Interview, 26 September 2011, Jackson, Mississippi*

Patrick Rettger (PR): There are basically two parts to the interview. The first part is just going through the audition process for tuba players in the academy band. The second half is about what your responsibilities are and about what you do now that you are in the band.

Naval Academy Band Tuba Player (NAT): Okay.

PR: So, what was the audition like when you did the audition? Or even maybe more importantly, what do you expect people to do when they come and audition for the Naval Academy Band?

NAT: (Home phone rings) Let me turn that off. Number one; don't let your phone go off during the audition. It has happened more times than I would care to admit. When we put together a tuba audition, we make sure to get some excerpts. These will be standard military band excerpts. Then we might add a few orchestral excerpts as we see fit. The goal is to find somebody's hole. That might be their soft playing or loud playing. It might be low articulation or high articulation or multiple tonguing/triple tonguing. There is an excerpt that will find somebody's hole. Each round is designed so that by the time somebody gets to the third round we have left no stone unturned to make sure that this player doesn't have any holes.

PR: To do this, do you intentionally pick excerpts that have a whole bunch of different styles?

NAT: Right. I mean we are not trying to kill anybody by any stretch of the imagination. I think the last tuba audition we did was in 2001 and we made sure that we could sit down and play the list first because the last thing you want to have happen is to have it look good on paper but you get these poor musicians that are in their third round and they are ground to a pulp. So, it has to be realistic. We are not looking to have a super hero or the next coming of Gene Pokorny or Pat Sheridan but we are looking for a solid player that has no holes stylistically, musically, or technically.

PR: Is it all excerpts or is there anything else?

NAT: The last time we did this, we had a prepared solo. I think we chose the second movement from the *Three Furies* for Solo Tuba by James Grant.<sup>466</sup> It was just a chance for us to see if the tuba player could emote in the solo literature. I mean, obviously we are a military band so we are not really looking for a solo player. We want a person that can do the job. Probably about ninety-five percent of the audition is going to be excerpts.

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<sup>466</sup> James Grant. *Three Furies* (Tempe, AZ: Potenza Music Publishing, 1993).

PR: Is there sight-reading?

NAT: There is sight-reading. When I auditioned there was a ton of sight-reading and the list of music I had to sight-read was crazy. It was like the last page of Hindemith's *Symphony for Band*.<sup>467</sup> ... Basically all the stuff that wasn't in the prepared music but is part of the standard literature was the sight-reading. We have started to dial back the sight-reading a bit because, simply put, we just don't read that much. I mean, we might do some things on short preparation so the ability to learn something quickly and having a lot of material under your belt when you get here is important but the ability to just sit down and blow it down is not really at the top of the list anymore.

PR: Is there anything else like scales or ensemble playing involved?

NAT: We don't have scales and each section has their own requirements. Like I just sat in on Tenor Saxophone and Alto Saxophone auditions and in both of those, the Saxophone section wanted to make sure that they played with the person. So, there was playing in that. Come to think of it, the last tuba auditions involved section playing as well. It's nothing too crazy just trying to see if this person can read the person's breathe next to you. Can they play as a section...?

PR: Is there any part of the audition that the person might be able to pick on their own? Some auditions will have a lot of excerpts but will also allow the person to bring a solo of their own choosing. Is there anything like that?

NAT: The last three tuba auditions, the solo was chosen for the player. So, it was more important to fit into that military box. You can be creative on your own time. I want to know what you can do for us.

PR: I can understand that. It's just that every branch's audition process seems to be slightly different. Some do and some don't...

NAT: I think it removes all variables. I want to compare apples to apples. You know. If somebody comes in and plays *Caprice No. 24*<sup>468</sup> and then someone else comes in and plays "Come to Jesus" in whole notes but plays it well, how do you really compare the two of them?

PR: How is the audition structured? Is it all done in one round? Is there a taped round or can anyone come and play an audition?

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<sup>467</sup> Paul Hindemith. *Symphony in B flat for Concert Band* (London: Schott and Co. Ltd., 1979).

<sup>468</sup> Niccolò Paganini. *24 Caprices* (New York: G. Shirmer, Inc., 1986).

NAT: The way we are doing it now, the audition is a “cattle call”. So, we try to get as many people here as possible. In the old days, there was a required taped round. Every audition in the past several years has used a “cattle call”. In the past, people were using reel to reel and a razor blade. Now there is so much recording technology that you can’t be sure what that person sounds like until they are in the room. So, instead of trying to over think all of that stuff we just plan for a long day or two and pack a lunch to listen to everybody.

PR: Nowadays, like you said, with the technology, even the people who have a lot of integrity and don’t want to edit much and don’t do a lot of editing, they almost feel like they have to in order to stay competitive because everyone else is doing it.

NAT: Right. It’s an interesting parallel between that and performance enhancing drugs. Don’t you think?

PR: Absolutely. That’s how I look at it. Anyways, how many rounds are there typically?

NAT: There pretty much have been three rounds. When you are hearing the thirtieth or the fortieth or the fiftieth person of the day, you listen to the sound but all you are thinking is “Please God. Let this person be able to play.” At least that is how I roll behind the screen. I wish teachers would teach their students that the second that you are in the room, you are being judged whether you are seen or not. So, if you take forever to get in between excerpts, then that is not playing with much confidence. If you warm-up, we are judging your warm-up notes. I remember after my audition, they said to me, “You won the audition on the first three notes of my warm-up. We were just hoping that you wouldn’t screw up.”

PR: I actually know somebody like that. They heard him warming up before the audition and liked what they heard.

NAT: Well in this case, it wasn’t necessarily about hearing me in the green room but when you get on stage and the committee says, “Take a couple seconds, get used to the room and blow a few notes.” Well, nothing is free in that room so...

PR: Oh. Okay. Is the audition blind?

NAT: Our first two rounds here are blind. Then the finals and super-finals or whatever you want to call it...the last round is without a screen. Plus there is an interview process coupled with the playing.

PR: So, once you've passed the audition, what happens next? Do you talk to a recruiter and go to MEPS<sup>469</sup> before or after the audition?

NAT: The Army does it before but we do it after. In the Navy, you win the audition and then you begin the process of enlisting into the Navy. For us there is no "A" school<sup>470</sup> but you do go to boot camp. Then you immediately report here. That's where it gets a little hanky because there are, I think, 66 people here and in the [Washington] D.C. Band there is about 180-185. So, there are about 250 permanent duty Naval musicians in the Navy. Then there is something like 300,000 people in the Navy. No recruiter knows what they are doing when it comes to our band and why would they? We are such an infinitesimally small part of the Navy so you have got to be on top of things when you are enlisting and that goes for any branch that you are enlisting, I believe. That is just because the MEPS people aren't equipped to handle most of our situations.

PR: That is a good way of putting it. I think that covers the first half of the interview. I can't think of anything else in the introductory area. So, let's move on the second half. As far as your responsibilities that you have to do in your daily life, how is the band set up? When you are hired, are you hired to play in every ensemble that the band has as long as it has a tuba player in it whether that is the ceremonial band or concert band or whatever, or is it set up so that you are part of the concert band and other tuba players play in the ceremonial band?

NAT: We are a little different from most...most of the other academy bands are this way in that most of the academy bands simply don't have enough people to do it that way. The band has the Commodores, the ceremonial unit, the Sea Chanters, and the concert band, etc. I mean, they are very compartmentalized. We have 66 people, two of which are officers, so really we have 64 players to put together brass quintets, woodwind quintets, saxophone quartets, big band, combos, ceremonial units, marching band, concert band, a rock band. I mean, you name it and I think we got it. I mean we have a flute and guitar duo to go play chamber stuff. So, I have played in I think every ensemble except the rock band since I enlisted. You'll have days where, in the morning...and I swear to you that I'm not making this up... we will have a military pass and review type of parade. I will be on the parade field at 5:45 in the morning with a fiberglass sousaphone. I will then play a concert band rehearsal from 8:30-11 with a tuba. Plus I will go exercise because PT is a big part of being in the military these days. Then I will come back and play a brass quintet ceremony followed by another ceremony at night sometimes.

PR: So, you have those days where you are literally playing for over 12 hours?

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<sup>469</sup> See Appendix A for more information on MEPS.

<sup>470</sup> "A" school refers to advanced schooling that a sailor receives after graduating from boot camp. See Armed Forces School of Music in Appendix A for a definition.

NAT: Well yeah, but then there will be days like today where I have absolutely zero military responsibilities today and this is a Monday. So, it's feast or famine. You never know what you're playing. You never know where you are playing. You don't know when you are playing.

PR: You don't get any advanced warning of that stuff?

NAT: Well, we have a job board and there are all these sheets of notebook sized paper with a grid on them that shows...because you can do a ceremony with a brass quintet, with a twelve piece band, with an eighteen piece band, with a twenty-four piece band. It is about how many people we have available and what the situation dictates. So for example, the Naval Chief of Operations just retired here last week and you have to put out a big band for that one. Whereas if you are going to play somebody's retirement ceremony, maybe a person of a lower rank and traveling two hours, then you might send a brass quintet for that. You have to pick the right weapon so to speak. But you know we do kind of know in advance but sometimes you don't. I mean, there are changes operationally...if you think about it, if you are sending a twenty-four piece band to go do this and the phone rings and somebody says, "Hey, I need a band here," and you only have sixty-four people to deal with...you are constantly juggling instrumentation, people, you name it. So, you might think that you are going here, but then the phone rings the day before or the day of. Then it's like, "Oh by the way, you're not doing this, you are doing something else." Sometimes there can be some really quick turn around on the changes.

PR: Do you play more in a chamber setting or more of a large ensemble, ceremonial or concert band setting?

NAT: ...It's about thirty percent concert band, thirty percent ceremony, twenty percent marching, and twenty percent [brass] quintet. The quintet serving as a dual purpose with the art side of the house with clinics, master classes, conference performances plus there is the other type where we hop in a car and drive three hours to play literally ten minutes of preliminary music, "Eternal Father Strong to Save" and "Anchor's Away" at the end. Then get in the van and drive three hours home. So, there are all kinds of gigs.

PR: Along those lines, do you find yourself playing more ceremonial than public relations gigs? I know it isn't an easy question to answer and some gigs aren't clear cut.

NAT: Yeah, there is a lot of a grey area. I mean, there are community relations performances but what you are doing is playing ceremonial music by reading down the Sousa book. Now, do the people love it? Is it a community relations performance? I would say yes but in my mind it's a ceremony. Not to put words in your mouth but I think a more succinct question is how much are you creating art and how much are you...? I think I probably make art about fifteen percent of the time.

PR: That is sort of what I was getting at.

NAT: And we are so small. I keep coming back to how small we are compared to the other premier bands. I remember that we had a concert with Gunther Schuller. We worked with him, had a rehearsal, and did a concert of his music that night. We got the hall and had a thousand people coming. Then the phone rings to tell us that we had two ceremonies and a parade before playing Gunther Schuller's music. So, even when you think you have a fastball right down the middle, something always seems to screw you. So, as much as we want to admit it or don't want to admit it, we are in the military. We serve the United States Navy and the United States Navy's job is to project power globally. They don't really care if you play Gunther Schuller's music with Gunther Schuller for a thousand of your closest friends. They want you to fill the mission that they need. Being prior service, I'm sure you totally understand that.

PR: Totally. The eighty-five percent of the ceremony or whatever you want to call it is what you have to do in order to do the fifteen percent of the music that you want to do.

NAT: Exactly. It's paying the bills. You have to keep the people writing the checks happy. I mean, I don't know how up you are on political events but I have [a certain period of time] before my retirement, and I seriously question whether we will have military music by then.

PR: Speaking of that, what is the status of your band right now?

NAT: You never know. If you talk to the old timers...music has been on the chopping block since the dawn of time. Every year we have an alumni concert in the summer and if you talk to people that were here in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, they tell us stories about when they almost lost the band in 1968 and all this kind of stuff. So, it's been coming for us for years... What separates this particular moment in global history from the other ones is the worldwide economic situation. We are stretched thin with two wars and funding... Music is not the tip of the spear so if a senator in a super-committee is getting the edict to cut 400 million dollars, they aren't really going to spend much time thinking about the 300 million dollars for all of military music. In my opinion, people are going to see the word music and they are going to say, "The hell with that. We don't need music to project power." Do I have any facts about the band being disassembled in 2017 or anything like that? I certainly don't but in terms of general feel of what is going on in society, what's going on in the military, and what's going on outside of the Naval Academy Band, I am genuinely concerned not only for our band but for all bands that there is going to be some serious belt tightening here in the immediate future.

PR: Is your band at least still a premier band? What is the current status?

NAT: We are permanent duty. There was something on the table that was being proposed 12 or 18 months ago to turn us into a rotational status type of thing. That pretty much died on the vine. So, we are entry level E-6<sup>471</sup>, permanently assigned....

PR: So, it is exactly the way it normally was. Nothing has changed except that your eyes are more open to what could happen tomorrow?

NAT: Exactly. Nothing has changed and we have not been told that anything will change in the immediate future, but when it's your first time living through the scalpel cutting you are thinking, "Holy heck. This might actually go down." The last time something like that happened to the band was 1993 when Senator Sam Nunn was looking to make political hay and was seeking to really gut military music.<sup>472</sup> That is the last true scare that we or any of the academy bands have had in terms of going away.

PR: See that is the thing. I had heard so many rumors related to that very topic and it turns out that none of them were accurate. Before I was under the impression that you were still a premier band but new personnel were coming in just like anyone else coming into the Navy as an E-3 or an E-4 or whatever.

NAT: And those rumors...I mean, everybody knows everybody. Music is such a small community and when we had that scare 12 or 18 months ago, with things like Facebook and all the ways people have to network almost instantaneously, there wasn't any time to let those rumors get any facts behind them. So, there were people in our band wondering what was going on to their friends, who sent that to their friends, who spun it to their friends. Eventually, the rumor is that assassins are going to come and kill us all and steal our instruments and give them to starving people in India. For all I know, that is the story that is going around out there. What concerns me is how that will affect the quality of the people that come to audition. Because if I think of it from a college student's standpoint, they will think, "Do I really want to audition for those cats or do I just want to wait for the Army Band or the Navy Band downtown?"

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<sup>471</sup> Meaning all members joining the band and enlisting for the first time begin with the pay grade of an E-6. See Appendix A for more information on pay grades and rating system.

<sup>472</sup> This is a reference to a proposal that Sen. Nunn presented to the Armed Services Committee in 1992. In an article for the *Baltimore Sun* on August 14, 1992, Peter Hermann reported the following in an article entitled, "Senate panel weighs eliminating funds for military bands but trumpeters and other brass oppose disbanding." In the article he said, "April 1, 1993, could be the day the music dies at America's military academies if Sen. Sam Nunn has his way. That is the day the money that keeps afloat those bands of enlisted personnel would stop flowing by the Senate Armed Services Committee. Sen. Nunn, D-Georgia, the committee chairman, believes that the bands at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, the Air Force Academy in Colorado, and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., should be made up of midshipmen and cadets who volunteer their time." "Senate Panel Weighs Eliminating Funds for Military Bands but Trumpeters and Other Brass Oppose the Disbanding," *Baltimore Sun*, September 26, 2011, accessed September 26, 2011, [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-08-14/news/1992227198\\_1\\_band-service-academies-armed-services-committee](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1992-08-14/news/1992227198_1_band-service-academies-armed-services-committee).



PR: At 34, I'm borderline on the age limit and I can say that, at least for me, if your band had an opening right now that I would not be discouraged for auditioning, even with the rumors that I had heard.

NAT: You said that you were prior service. How long were you in?

PR: I was in 4 years.

NAT: Well, I know that at least in the Navy you should be good until you are 38.

PR: I am just reluctant to talk to a recruiter about that but either way, with the rumors that I knew I still would take an audition if it were offered.

NAT: Well, [the oldest tuba player] here isn't eligible to retire until January 31, 2016. So, unless the [the youngest Tuba player] decides to... he has been in ten years.

PR: Well, I'd be cutting it close if I waited until 2016.

NAT: And that's if [he] walks at the stroke of twenty. [He] is an E-7 which means that [he] can wait until [he's been in for] 24 years should [he] chose to.... You've asked a lot of questions about my playing but, as you know well, playing is only about thirty percent of my job.

PR: That is the next area I want to get to. Are you required to do any collateral duties?

NAT: That's a fun question and a difficult question because let's say, I'm twenty-two years old and I win a job to come to the band. Am I required to do any collateral duties? Absolutely not. The first enlistment people are basically only required to show up, maintain their body weight and fitness to the Navy's physical fitness standards, you show up and play your job, and go home. It's great. But the Navy has this lovely little specter that they introduced a few years ago called PTS or Perform to Serve. In a nutshell, what that means is that you are going to be compared against everybody that, let's say, joined the Navy on the same day that you do. So, what we are having a problem with in the premier bands, is in the past you could win the job and get hired and do the job for literally twenty years, retire as an E-6 and be done with it. Well, the Navy is now looking at people who can come in and they want to know what else they can do for the Navy. So, person A and person B comes in. Person A just shows up and plays their instrument. Person B goes out to a fleet band and ten years later has run Ops,<sup>473</sup> been a unit leader, been a command fitness leader, and all these military collateral duties. So, the computer algorithm looks at these two sailors and when it comes time to re-enlist there might only

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<sup>473</sup> OPS is an abbreviation for the operations department within the band. It is this department's responsibility to make sure any performances, training, or other responsibilities that the band is assigned are completed to the satisfaction of the contacted party.

be so many billets to re-enlist to. For sailor A, they say, "Thanks so much. You did what you were hired to do but you didn't do enough for the Navy. Goodbye." And that's it. They will be gone in ten years.

PR: So, you actually have to compete with people in the fleet bands for promotion?

NAT: Yeah. This is where it gets really weird. This is a force shaping tool they are using in the big Navy to get rid of the people that aren't working hard enough. And what we are running into a little problem with here is, like I told you before there are roughly 260 musicians permanent duty and 750 total musicians in a 300,000 person Navy. When the Navy has a giant band aid that it slaps over an issue, we sometimes get caught underneath that band aid. Has it hurt us yet? No it hasn't but it has come awfully, awfully close. This is difficult to explain even to people in the military. Let's say, you are fifteen months from the day that you are supposed to re-enlist, your last day of obligated service. You put in your paperwork to re-enlist and the Navy says yes or no. Every month you keep asking the Navy if you can re-enlist and they tell you yes or no. So, we had an oboist that was prior service. She played in the Army Field Band for six years. She comes to us and her re-enlistment application was denied for about eight straight months and finally a quota opened up and she was allowed to re-enlist. We have a tuba player that also had that happen. He got down to five days before he was going to have to leave the Navy and a quota finally opened up and he was allowed to re-enlist.

PR: I heard about that happening in the fleet band interview as well. As a matter of fact, I talked to a person in a different branch who said that they heard an audition for a person who was being kicked out of the Navy because they basically didn't have a high enough rank and had reached their limit for enlistment at that rating. They still wanted to be in the military but they had to get out. So, they ended up transferring.

NAT: Those have always been there and they are still there. So, for example, you have to make E-5 by fourteen years or you are gone. You have to make E-4 by eight years or you're gone. But PTS is something that is even more stringent than that. It's based on every time that you re-enlist. So, let's say you win the audition today and you get a four year enlistment. When you have to re-enlist, you sign up for four more years. Well, at the end of that enlistment, when you are at your eight year mark is where the PTS stuff starts to kick in. We haven't lost anybody yet but we've come very close. It's just one of those Navy things that is difficult to explain or find the right link in the chain to explain to people why this should not apply to us. So, that is a long answer to your question on collateral duties. So, do you have to? No you don't but if you want to give yourself more options in order to stay in, most people do. But there are only so many jobs to go around. As you stay longer, the way you get promoted is not based at all on how you play. It's about what else you can do for the Navy. So, in order to get from E-6 to E-7 is all about

leadership. How many people do you lead? I don't know how much detail you want...but basically the longer you stay in, the more military responsibilities you have to accept. To use myself as an example, when I got in the band we were an E-5 entry band. Matter of fact, we were the only premier band that was this way. So back [then], I was an E-5. You would promote from E-5 to E-6 off of a written test. Which I have to tell you was...let me give you an example. This is one of two hundred questions. Take the ninth note to the alto saxophone part to "God Bless America," the thirteenth note to the "Star Spangled Banner" trumpet part, and a "d." Invert that chord. What chord scale would you use to improvise over that chord in the key six flats minor? I kid you not. It's like the Sunday New York Times crossword puzzle only with music. Once you get past that, to get from E-6 to E-7 there is still a test but your packet goes before a board and the board looks at your leadership.<sup>474</sup> Then once you get from E-6 to E-7, E-7 to E-8, and E-8 to E-9, it's all about how much more command-wide, big-Navy-type leadership do you do. So for me, I play in [a number of ensembles]. That is the playing side of my job. As far as my collateral duties go, from the smallest to the biggest duty I am the unit leader [of a chamber group] so that means that I am in charge of the musicians in that group, all of the logistics of getting from point A to point B, the details of the ceremony, helping out the people running the ceremony because they sometimes have never written a ceremony in their life, to make sure their ceremony doesn't get messed up. Those are my duties with that group. I am the awards writer. So, for any award that these sixty-six people get, I am responsible for filing out all of the paperwork, writing correctly.... And the amount of details that go into writing awards are...the instruction manual for writing awards is 219 pages long. Each award has a different rule for it. So, I have to write awards for sixty-six people. I am the leading Chief for the training division. So, there are all kinds of military training like for "Don't ask, don't tell." We have eight topics a year that roll through for general military training. By training them, I either have to find training sessions on the yard that someone else is going to give or I have to give the training myself...on such lovely things as sexual health, how to balance your checkbook, operational risk management and other things. So, my biggest job is the leading Chief...I'm basically like the personnel manager of an orchestra. I'm the leading Chief of the Concert Band. So, anything that has to do with the Concert Band and the fifty-two people that play in it is under my purview. I do everything except conduct.

PR: And you would have to work a normal performance schedule even if you didn't have those duties.

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<sup>474</sup> This is sort of like a promotion resume. It has any information about you that might be relevant for being promoted including primary duties such as ensembles that are played in, collateral duties, leadership roles, and test scores for tests like the semi-annual physical fitness tests and the written promotion test. Basically, the more things a sailor does to help their band and the Navy as a whole, the better chance he/she has to be promoted and this packet contains all the information for this promotion evaluation.

NAT: Oh yeah. And because we are so small, we don't have any dedicated office personnel. I have a good friend in the Marine Band... She's been in the Marine Band for around eighteen or twenty years and listening to the inner workings of that band compared to the inner workings of my band are very different. We move our own gear. We write our own music. We are completely and totally self-sufficient. We have players manning all the administrative, public affairs, career counselor, you name it.

PR: You mentioned body image and physical fitness. Is it on your own or is it something that you do in a group?

NAT: Based on our schedule, it is very hard to get sixty-six people to be in one place at one time. If you think about it, if we are all at the same place to exercise, then no one is playing any jobs. So, the command is very reticent about making PT<sup>475</sup> mandatory. So, you are pretty much left on your own. We weigh in once a month. The Navy requires us to weigh in twice a year. We weigh in as a command once a month and the command fitness leadership or CFL people<sup>476</sup> see a trend with your weight and/or body composition; you have two ways to make standards in the Navy. You can step on a scale and be a certain weight or you can have a tape that goes around your neck and abdomen and that fits into a formula and tells you how fat you are. So, if they notice a trend then you will be put into what is called "The Fitness Enhancement Program" and then it is command supervised three times a week.<sup>477</sup> It's there to make sure that you are not going to have any problems.

PR: You said the Navy requires that you are weighed twice a year. Can I assume there is also a physical fitness test around the same time?

NAT: Right. They are married up with each other. You pass the body composition part of that and then you have a one and a half mile run, sit-ups, and push-ups. And there are options for the run. You can either chose to run a mile and a half, bike, or use an elliptical.

PR: Are there any other military things that your band is required? Is it deployable or anything like that?

NAT: Nope. That's one thing that I absolutely love about this job. I've been in the band for [over a decade] and I have been on the road for a total of fourteen days.

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<sup>475</sup> See Appendix A for information on PT, otherwise known as physical fitness.

<sup>476</sup> These are members of the band that are responsible for insuring that all members on the band meet the Navy's fitness standards.

<sup>477</sup> Members of the band that are put in the Fitness Enhancement Program have regularly scheduled organized physical fitness until the CFL decides they are no longer in danger of failing any portion of the fitness program.

PR: So, your band does very little traveling at all.

NAT: Nope because we are attached to the Naval Academy. Our mission is to support and develop the brigade of midshipmen and whatever the rest of the statement is. So, I've gone to the Mid-west Band Clinic<sup>478</sup> for three days. I used to be a music librarian so I would get tasked to go forage for new music. So, I've gone to mid-west a couple times. We've had a couple of overnight gigs here and there. Usually it's a there and back kind of thing or we'll go and stay a day. Then we'll come back the next day.

PR: So, you can really get settled in.

NAT: Oh yeah. I mean, these bands that go tour...the Marine Band used to do forty-five day tours and now they are down to thirty. But still thirty days on the road, that's a long time.

PR: Speaking of the other premier bands, do you ever find yourself working with those premier bands?

NAT: As far as a gigging situation on the outside, oh yeah. Total inbred. I play in a quintet... That is someone I gig with on the outside. You always run into...well if you really think about it, Washington D.C. has more wind players than probably any other place on the face of the earth. Trying to get an adjunct college teaching job around here, you might as well be an astronaut. It's ridiculous how many brass players there are around here. But in terms of professionally, occasionally we will send an oboe player to the Air Force Band when theirs gets sick at the last minute. We trade back and forth with the Navy Band. I mean there is a little bit of that inter-service every once in a while but not too often.

PR: So, it's only on specific occasions when you need something here or there.

NAT: Right. When the other branch can spare and you are in need.

PR: Is there anything that your band does that the other premier band might not find itself doing?

NAT: I think I covered that when I talked about how we are dictated by our size. Everybody plays everything. We have a great big band. They are amazing. The unit leader is the drummer and he is a Grammy winner. His day job just happens to be with the Navy. At night he goes off and makes records and wins Grammys. We have got some amazing talent but if you want to be, for example, a classical saxophonist you better go

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<sup>478</sup> This is a major music conference that meets annually in Chicago, IL in the first half of December.

and audition for the Marine Band because you can do that there. With us, everybody has to be as flexible in their styles and capabilities as possible.

PR: Do you get to play a lot of jazz in your band?

NAT: I do actually. Do you mean in the band? I have in the band but not so much recently. But lately there has been this band around town doing a lot of “Birth of the Cool” stuff. My first jazz gig was in college and Maria Schneider came out and we were playing some jazz with this big name, big band, artist and I don’t play another note of jazz except in the concert band, the mechanically separated byproduct stuff that isn’t real jazz. I mean, you play these jive charts in concert band. It’s jazz but it’s not jazz. But the next call I get is fifteen years later and I go play Blues Alley. And that is the first pure jazz gig I did in about fifteen years.

PR: It sounds like the band isn’t going to ask you to do any improvisation anytime soon.

NAT: I haven’t had to improvise...I take that back. For a while we had this second line, New Orleans brass band that we had to play at football games for a while. So, I had about a week to ten days to listen to about as many Dirty Dozen Brass Band recording as I could get my hands on and figure out how to slop through in that style. I survived. Was I thankful that this was before cell phone cameras became prevalent? You bet I was. That’s the thing that is so scary now. Every moment is a YouTube moment. It happens to us all the time especially when the midshipmen come in and the parents come in for the new midshipmen and during graduation. If you go onto YouTube on the day after graduation or you Google Naval Academy Bands or search on that, there’s going to be fifteen or twenty videos. So, you never know when what you are doing is going to be broadcast globally. That really affects how we conduct ourselves. You know, making sure that yes, we are standing perfectly at attention. Yes, our uniforms are perfect. Yes, the block looks good. Yes, we rehearsed this. We are very cognizant that all it takes is just one Admiral to look at something where we are having a bad day and think, “What the hell do we need those guys for?”

PR: Or even worse, a Senator who is looking to cut the band program from military budgets.

NAT: So, back in the old days when all you had to worry about is a newspaper reporter or a still photographer or something like that. Now every single time that you go out, you could be on the internet. I don’t know how I got on that tangent but....

PR: I think that pretty much covers it. I’m trying to represent your band and all these bands as accurately and as positively as possible. So, if there is anything that we’ve missed I’d love to hear about it but I think that is about it.

NAT: I don't think of it as a positive or a negative, but it is what it is. I got in the band when I was twenty-four and I was a varsity athlete in high school and when I went to college I drank a lot of beer and played a lot of tuba. When I got here I had enough residual athletic ability that I could show up twice a year, run my mile and a half, and do what I had to do. As you inch closer to forty, I find that I am spending almost as much time exercising as I am practicing. If you are not equipped mentally to do that than...it's just something that I never once considered when I was a college kid auditioning for these bands. Forty seemed like it was miles and miles away. All of that getting big around the middle isn't going to happen to me. Well, guess what? It does. Father Time comes for us all. That is the one thing in this job that as I am aging that is exceedingly difficult for me. I mean, I've always been a big guy and I'm always right on the line. So, I'm not exaggerating when I say that I exercise as much as I practice. So, every time I go out to the colleges and do the master class-type thing, I always take the time to impress upon people the importance of building that culture of fitness early because when you are thirty-five is not the time to decide to think about doing some sit-ups. That is the only thing that would keep me from seeing the finish line. The only thing that would keep me from reaching the finish line is that plate of doughnuts and that slab of barbeque ribs.

PR: Well, I appreciate the chance to get to talk to you.

NAT: You're very welcome.

## APPENDIX C

## ANONYMOUS PREMIER BAND TUBA PLAYER COMMENTS FOR CHAPTER V

## EXCERPTS

The following is a collection of comments made by three anonymous current and retired premier band tuba players about the band excerpts located in Chapter V. These comments are listed alphabetically by composer's last name and were made between September 25, 2011 and October 28, 2012. The first tuba player will be called Anonymous Tubist A. The second will be Anonymous Tubist B, The third will be Anonymous Tubist C.

*Third Symphony* by James Barnes

The Third Symphony was conceived during a particularly emotional time in James Barnes' life, after the loss of his baby daughter, Natalie. With half note at mm. 66, the tuba solo, punctuated only by rhythmic pulses in the timpani on a pedal C, is a mournful lamentation throughout. The musical term *doloroso*, meaning an expression of grief, is indicated. The first movement, Lento, begins with timpani, and leads immediately into the tuba solo.

The soloist needs to first have the entire solo in mind in order to perform it appropriately and set the tone for the entire movement. The line lends itself best to a rubato performance. The soloist needs to pay careful attention to the intonation of the C<sub>6</sub> in bars 6, 24, 27, 29, and 31 so that it matches that of the timpani and finally with the bass clarinet in bar 33. Be aware of the rhythmic difference between bars 18/19 as it



compares to bar 20. It's too easy to play the rhythms all the same way. The soloist should also have good flexibility and command of the lower range.

-Anonymous Tubist A

*Russlan and Ludmilla* by Mikhail Glinka; arr. by Frank Winterbottom

This is one of the "Titans" of the military band repertoire, striking fear into young college musicians who see it for the first time and they realize: "I'd really better start working on my double-tonguing!"

The tempo: I have played it as slow as the whole note = 80 (or half note = 160), and as fast as the whole note = 100 (half note = 200). The most common tempo throughout my Navy Band career was the half note = 176-192. If you have the technique, you will discover, as in most "busy" transcriptions, that the tough part of the job is the breathing. It is essential that you find a way to breath comfortably to support an agile tongue.

Avoid compressing and interrupting the flow of the piece. If you aren't up to nailing every note perfectly (some will do this by the way), at least be MOST sensitive to style, balance, and flow of the music. Additionally, do not take the short quarter note, quarter rest, quarter note, quarter note figures for granted. I can't tell you how many times a performer has slopped over that figure in the 7th bar of #3; mainly dragging the figure, or simply, not just nailing it. Avoid compressing the four 8th note figures nine bars and five bars before #4. Sometimes, the "short-burst" technique rushes badly. Another figure which looks harmless but can be slowed is at #8. Be aware of all of the directions there and keep moving forward. Be prepared to nail the tutti figure four bars before #16; once again, in tune, in time, with correct style. At #18, don't slow the half notes, don't

compress the busy stuff. Note dynamics marked and if asked, build excitement all the way into the *piu mosso* after #19 where you will go into a "1" feel. Be careful as the speed and volume of this section can cause a lot of chips, divots, spleeahs, and other "gifts." At the end, be very accurate with your finger coordination on the slurred C major scales. Sustain a full "ff" at the end for as long as the conductor can and good luck!

-Anonymous Tubist B

*Lincolnshire Posy* by Percy Grainger

This is another of the classic pieces for band. Grainger was a master at writing for the wind band.

In Horkstow Grange, be sure to place the 8th notes in 33 and 34 properly, as well as the triplets in 35 and 36. These will most likely be dictated by the conductor in performance. In an audition setting, use your best judgment...

Rufford Park Poachers is a bona fide band excerpt, from m. 46 until 84, the tubas a playing all sorts of dynamics and rhythms. It's a long haul, so pacing is important and be sure to observe everything directed in terms of dynamics, articulation and rhythm. Be prepared to play either octave, but in general the bottom octave is the more likely to appear since it is more challenging.

In "The Brisk Young Sailor", there is one solo passage at 23. The section joins at 33, keep the 16th notes as clean as possible. M. 41 is marked "angrily" and many conductors seem to want it louder than the marked "single *forte*".

Lord Melbourne is mostly about following the conductor so doesn't have much that is audition worthy. One exception is m. 28. Be sure to delineate the 8th note triplet from the next m. which is in 3/8 time.

In "Lost Lady Found": at 81, match your sound with that of the woodwinds that have already set the style for this section. At 87, pay attention to the time, also in 92. The bottom octave from 130 to the end should be broad and supportive. Make sure your low "D" is in tune and doesn't bark.

-Anonymous Tubist C

*" J'ai été au bal"* by Donald Grantham

In " J'ai été au bal" by Donald Grantham, there is a prominent tuba solo at m. 116. It is in a light swing style as the part indicates. It is basically the same 12 measures of material repeated with different accompaniment the second time. Listening to the accompanying groove and feeling the beat on 2 and 4 of the measure helps keep this solo moving along. Pay particular attention to the marked staccato notes and really drive through measures 122-124. Dynamics are clearly indicated, but the player should tailor the extremes to be sure and come through the accompaniment. This excerpt sits just fine on the CC or BB-flat tuba. It is one of the more involved tuba solos in the band repertoire.

-Anonymous Tubist C

*Symphony in B flat for Concert Band* by Paul Hindemith

This work is one of the masterpieces for band, every instrument is challenged. The writing for tuba in this work is, in my opinion, very good. When playing music by Hindemith, I am often directed to be particularly literal with articulation instructions. Full value should be given to all notes not marked staccato. Section blend is very important in this piece.

In the first movement at letter H, the dotted 8th/16th pattern must be very accurate

and crisp... This material continues until letter J, when the first really challenging material appears. The dynamic is marked *piano*, many make the mistake of playing this too loudly, compounding the problem of the lack of rests. In performance with multiple tubas, leaving out a well chosen note here or there (stagger breathing) results in a very fluid line with no gaps. In an audition, the goal is to play all the notes. Most can do this, but players with smaller lung capacity may need to leave out a note between J and m.

147. Care should be given to counting at measures 149 and 152. The entrance at 182 needs to be smooth and not too loud, but don't play it so soft that you couldn't play it even softer if asked. The entrance at 203 is another breathing challenge. Breathe after the quarter notes on the end of phrases and keep the tempo from dragging.

The second movement must start very steadily. The material after letter B needn't *crescendo* past a *forte* and then goes back down to *piano*. One bar before H is material that might appear on an audition. Keeping the tempo steady and getting off of the ties is important...

In the 3rd movement, the tubas have the subject at m. 30. It doesn't need to be too loud, but must keep moving steadily. Make a good *decrescendo* into letter E. At 128, more material appears that could appear on an audition; again, keep the time moving and *decrescendo* nicely. Similar material appears at letter L and into M. At M, observe the slightly slower tempo. If given the opportunity, delineate the 2 speeds clearly for the listener (in this case the panel). The stretch from 196 to the end is a great moment in band literature, be careful to not get carried away. Controlled sound is important here, especially in an audition situation.

-Anonymous Tubist C

*First Suite in E Flat* by Gustav Holst

Movement I is the biggest concern in auditions

The key to the opening of this piece is the initial controlled, well-timed breath, and a clear understanding of what the conductor's wishes are with regards to tempo!! Understanding conductors will move the tempo comfortably and provide a cue that enables the tubist to take a nice full, relaxed breath. When this happens, the result is a lovely, long phrase played in one breath with a relaxed finish to the Eb.

If the conductor wishes to draw things out a bit, the usually solution is to take a nice breath at the beginning, and another quick, smooth breath after the low Bb in the 4th bar to finish. It is important that if this is the case, the re-entry sound must be smooth, in character and in the flow of the music, so as not to interrupt the phrase.

Throughout the piece DO note the differences in dynamics and style in the various sections, and note as well the players with whom you share the figures. Go for proper style, balance, and solid pitch control.

The Pesante after Letter "B" can also be played in one carefully-planned and controlled breath. Once again, the speed and dynamic of the passage may dictate the ability to pull that off. Otherwise, quick non-interruptive breaths will suffice, and for those who practice it and have the skill, the use of "sniff breaths" are particularly affective. Keep in mind this passage starts at "ff" and winds down to "p" and avoid slowing down and losing clarity in negotiating the *decrescendo*.

-Anonymous Tubist B

*Barnum and Bailey's Favorite* by Karl King

I recommend playing this at a tempo within the range of a quarter note =172-196, feeling it in a relaxed "1." This would be the most likely comfortable double-tongue range. Any faster than the 196 can sound frantic or start feeling "compressed" to the listener. Remember that the key is to have the performance sound effortless, yet exciting-in control but stylistically correct. Strive for accuracy, absolute clarity and play in a way that is likely to blend with the current low brass section. (Note: Know the ensemble you're auditioning for in each case. If there is a long-standing conductor or a section with a certain stylistic approach, be aware of this ahead of time by listening to recordings.)

The two most commonly-heard excerpts are the second strain tutti starting in the first 2nd ending, and the "breakup" or final strain. Once again; you start in the 2nd ending. The last one is more challenging simply because it starts lower. When you prepare these excerpts, you will be required (99% of the time) to play the lower octave, but be able to do both.

Do NOT be surprised if you are requested to play the opening and first strain and take the second ending. Some committees want to hear that opening grace note figure and a solid "ff" first strain, accurate accents and a strong feeling of steady tempo.

Occasionally, you may be asked to play the final *Grandioso* section. It's a "bonus" to understand that there is generally a tempo change from the first to second time. Make sure the "Dbs" and "Gbs" are in tune.

-Anonymous Tubist B

*The Stars and Stripes Forever* by John Philip Sousa

This is arguably the most important excerpt one will find on many band audition lists. It tells the panel many things about the player, very quickly. Can the player keep steady time? Is he or she playing the rhythms correctly? Is it in an appropriate style? Hopefully the answer to all these questions is yes. Many candidates overlook one of these items, which is too bad, since they are all easily mastered.

Practice this march with a metronome. Chances are that the panel is tapping their toes along with you to see if you are steady. You will discover tendencies in the way you play this music which can transfer to similar phrases in other pieces of music. An example is the dogfight section: if you are not careful, the running quarter notes will do just that - run away.

Sometimes, after the second time through the dogfight section, the conductor will put in a *rallentando* before the final time through the *Grandioso* section. I would avoid doing this in an audition situation. Just play it steadily and let the conductor decide such things.

As for correct rhythms, the first strain is the biggest indicator of someone having put in their time on this march. The 16th notes are meant to "roll" the line downward and must be very quick. Too often, players turn these into 8th notes. This is the only Sousa march I am aware of that employs this style of bass line writing, something that adds to the uniqueness of the march, I feel.

Stylistically, while there is some variation from group to group on how to perform marches, the player should invest some time in researching how the group he or she is auditioning for actually plays the march. Many recordings of this music are

available; misinterpreting the style should not be an issue. Over the past several decades, marches have become less frequently programmed on college band concerts, so students have much less exposure to them. Military musicians have a great deal of exposure to them, so individual study is necessary on the part of the student.

-Anonymous Tubist C

*Toccata Marziale* by Ralph Vaughan Williams

The most commonly asked excerpts in this piece are the opening to the 2nd bar of #3, the section starting with the pickup note to two bars before #7 into the first bar of #9, and the pickup to the 4th bar after #19 to the end. Occasionally, a committee will want to hear the bar after #16 to #19 as well.

Once again, expect to play the lower octave with the exception of the three bars before #3. Often you'll be told to play the lower octave until that point and then finish in the upper octave.

The opening should be bold, full, and with a lot of character. Clarity of pitch, control of the big sound and proper articulation is the key to this opening. Nothing is short and pecky; nothing is connected too closely (as in the pickup to the second bar of #2). This should be long and stylish without getting "lava-lampy!" Note the contrast between that figure, the opening, and the still loud, but lighter approach three bars before #3.

After #6, it is interesting that Vaughan Williams has the pickup to bar four marked in three ways: "f," with tenuto marks, and with the indication of marc.!!! Pay attention mainly to making a full, clear, articulated sound and place the accents well and you'll be fine. Lots of interesting articulation markings, so heed those. Note all of the



markings from the bar before #7 and through the next 6-7 bars. Play full, keep the tempo moving, stay in tune and be aware of some ways the music is emphasized. Ask yourself; "Why is the last note in the fourth bar before #8 marked "ff" again? It has been marked ff since #7! Hmmmmm.....be smart to place emphasis there to kick off the familiar figure. This happens again in the pickup to five after #8. You are a bit of a chameleon in this, where you are a supporting figure and then a prominent figure in the music. Recognize these opportunities.

-Anonymous Tubist B

*Oberon Overture* by C.M. von Weber arr. Mayhew Lake

This is a transcription that uses the tubas like celli and string basses. I believe it was intended for a section of BBb and Eb tubas. Much of the upper octave pushes into tessitura that some might consider uncharacteristic for contrabass tubas. In my experience with settings like this arrangement, if the section has 3 players, one will cover the upper octave, with the other 2 on the bottom. At times, all 3 might opt to play the bottom, especially if the notes are doubled in the euphonium and low woodwind parts. The first instance we might explore doing without the top octave is 6 before letter "A". The goal, as always, is to make these transcriptions as close to an orchestra sound as possible, so some experimentation with the sound will be necessary, I feel.

From the beginning of the work a light feel will be desired, so perhaps only one player plays the first 15 bars. At the Allegro con fuoco, be prepared to move! Tubas will often be the culprits if the tempo drags, so practice with a metronome. Once the 16th notes start in, they need to be very clean. Fortunately, the music follows very predictable patterns and lays reasonably well on either CC or BBb tuba. Having the top

octave player on Eb would be a great luxury to have when performing this arrangement. At 17 bars before letter "B", the top octave has a high D. Depending on the ensemble's strength, this might be a good place to drop the octave, as tubas that high add a rather strong quality to the sound. Nonetheless, when preparing this work for an audition, be ready to play anything on the page.

At 8 after letter b, the top octave must be covered, but only by those normally assigned to it. Keep the quarter notes in the bottom octave, as they are likely the string bass parts and the top is the cello.

When learning this transcription, I believe it is important to know how the strings would be performing it. Get the original orchestra score and find out when they are bowed and when they are pizzicato. It is important to be able to emulate a bowed cello and a plucked string bass. Combine that knowledge with steady tempo, accurate dynamics and an awareness of what the rest of the ensemble is doing stylistically.

-Anonymous Tubist C

## APPENDIX D

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Tel: 601.266.6820  
Fax: 601.266.5509  
[www.usm.edu/irb](http://www.usm.edu/irb)

TO: Patrick Rettger  
3500 Hardy Street, Apt. 1  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

FROM: Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.  
HSPRC Chair

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10030101

PROJECT TITLE: The Examination of the Preparation and Requirements for  
Tubists Desiring a Career in the Military, with an Emphasis on Premier Band  
Auditions

Enclosed is The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection  
Review Committee Notice of Committee Action taken on the above referenced  
project proposal. If I can be of further assistance, contact me at (601) 266-4279,  
FAX at (601) 266-4275, or you can e-mail me at [Lawrence.Hosman@usm.edu](mailto:Lawrence.Hosman@usm.edu).  
Good luck with your research.

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

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Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
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Fax: 601.266.5509  
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### HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10030101

PROJECT TITLE: **The Examination of the Preparation and Requirements for Tubists Desiring a Career in the Military, with an Emphasis on Premier Band Auditions**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 03/01/2010 to 05/31/2011

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Patrick Rettger**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Arts & Letters**

DEPARTMENT: **Music**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Exempt Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 03/10/2010 to 03/09/2011

*Lawrence A. Hosman*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.  
HSPRC Chair

*3-25-10*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW FORM  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
(SUBMIT THIS FORM IN DUPLICATE)

Protocol # \_\_\_\_\_  
(office use only)

Name Patrick Rettger Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address 3500 Hardy St Apt. 1  
(address to receive information regarding this application)

College/Division COAL Dept Music

Department Box # 5081 Phone (601)266-5543

Proposed Project Dates: From March 1, 2010 To May 31, 2011  
(specific month, day and year of the beginning and ending dates of full project, not just data collection)

Title The Examination of the Preparation and Requirements for Tubists Desiring a Career in the Military, with an

Emphasis on Premier Band Auditions

Funding Agencies or Research Sponsors \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Number (when applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ New Project

☒ Dissertation or Thesis

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal or Continuation: Protocol # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Change in Previously Approved Project: Protocol # \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 2/24/10  
Principal Investigator Date

[Signature] 2/26/10  
Advisor Date

[Signature] 2/27/10  
Department Chair Date

**RECOMMENDATION OF HSPRC MEMBER**

\_\_\_\_\_ Category I, Exempt under Subpart A, Section 46.101 ( ) ( ), 45CFR46.

\_\_\_\_\_ Category II, Expedited Review, Subpart A, Section 46.110 and Subparagraph ( ).

\_\_\_\_\_ Category III, Full Committee Review.

HSPRC College/Division Member DATE

HSPRC Chair DATE

## Questionnaire

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out the following survey answering all questions as instructed. All personal information will remain confidential except individual's names and responses. Answers will be used for the sole purpose of providing information leading to the doctoral dissertation of Patrick Rettger regarding the important excerpts for tubists to know when preparing to audition for premier military bands.

If the individual wishes to remain anonymous please leave "Name" blank or indicate anywhere on the form that the person surveyed wishes to remain anonymous for the final document.

Please provide as much information as possible pertaining to each question (i.e. composer's name, title of the composition, arranger/transcriber's name, excerpt/section of particular importance, etc.). Your responses will aid in the creation of a band excerpt book that the tuba community currently lacks. Questions, comments and concerns can be sent to Patrick Rettger, phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ .  
Thank you for helping to make this project a success.

1. What are the twenty five most important excerpts to know when auditioning for a premier military band? Include original works, marches, and transcriptions. For transcriptions, please include arranger's name to eliminate confusion with multiple transcriptions of the same work.

1	14
2	15
3	16
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12	25
13	



**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT**

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled "An Examination of the Preparation and Requirements for Tuba Players Desiring a Career in the Military, with an Emphasis on Premier Band Auditions." All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained by Patrick Rettger. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected. The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Patrick Rettger at \_\_\_\_\_. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patrick Rettger Date

Please mail consent form to:

Patrick Rettger



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